

**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY  
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE, AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR  
COUNTY AUDIT DEPARTMENT**

**INTRODUCTION**

By authority of the Constitution of the State of Florida, Article VIII, Section 1.(d) the Clerk of the Circuit Court (Clerk) serves as County Auditor.

Recognizing the importance of government compliance with laws, policies, established procedures and accountability for the use of public funds while exercising its power and performing its duties, the Clerk has established and maintains a county audit function.

The mission of the County Audit Department is to serve the citizens and taxpayers of the County through the performance of independent, objective reviews and evaluations of all relevant activities under the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). In performing these duties, the County Audit Department is obliged to assist management in achieving efficient and effective administration of their areas of responsibility. These efforts should improve county operations and help to ensure that Hillsborough County is fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities to the citizens and taxpayers of the County.

**STRUCTURE**

Since the Clerk is elected, and thus responsible to the citizens and taxpayers of Hillsborough County, the Clerk is independent of those activities under the BOCC.

The County Audit Department is responsible for auditing and reviewing those functions, activities and programs under the direction of the BOCC. The Director of County Audit reports directly to the Clerk. The County Audit Department has no direct responsibility to, or authority over, any area subject to its audit and review. Therefore, the Department is organizationally independent from those areas which it will be auditing and reviewing. The Director of County Audit has the authority and responsibility to conduct audits and reviews of all agencies funded by the BOCC and departments under the County Administrator and to issue reports thereon. The Attorney General, in opinion NO. 86-38, stated that "Until legislatively or judicially determined otherwise, the clerk of circuit court as ex officio county auditor is not authorized to perform post-audit functions on the records of other constitutional officers."

To facilitate accuracy and completeness of audits and reviews, it is necessary that the County Audit Department have access to all relevant resources. Accordingly, the Department shall have access

to all records including, but not limited to, books, records, files, papers, documents and information stored on computer relating to any department, function, activity or program of the BOCC. Documents and information provided to County Audit Department employees will be handled in the same prudent manner as by those employees normally accountable for the material.

The County Audit Department may employ consultants, staff assistants, or use the services of public accounting firms as may be necessary for the conduct of auditing responsibilities. Where appropriate and with BOCC approval, the cost of outside services may be billed to the auditee. This document shall not prohibit the County Administrator from obtaining independent outside consultants as considered necessary.

The County Audit Department has the responsibility to conduct all audits in accordance with professional standards, to include, but not be limited to, the "Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing", as published by the Institute of Internal Auditors.

The Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that personnel assigned to perform internal audits will be proficient in applying internal auditing standards and adhere to the Code of Ethics of the Institute of Internal Auditors. A quality assurance program as recommended by the Institute of Internal Auditors shall be established and followed.

#### PLANNING

After consultation with the BOCC and the County Administrator, the Director of County Audit will be responsible for preparing an audit workplan for each fiscal year. This plan should include the departments, agencies, programs and functions to be audited. The plan should be developed by evaluating each department, agency, program and function based on criteria suggested in the "Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing" as well as by input from the BOCC and the County Administrator. The plan will be approved by the Clerk and presented to the BOCC and the County Administrator for their approval; however, nothing contained herein shall limit the Clerk from performing his statutory responsibilities in safeguarding county assets.

#### SCOPE OF WORK

The Department will examine and evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of an organization's systems of internal control and the procedures used to carry out assigned responsibilities. This process includes:

- Reviewing the reliability and integrity of financial and operating information and the means used to identify, measure, classify and report such information.
- Reviewing the systems established to ensure compliance with

laws, regulations, policies and procedures, to determine whether the organization is in compliance.

- Reviewing the means of safeguarding assets and, as appropriate, verifying the existence of those assets.
- Reviewing operations or programs to ascertain whether results are consistent with established goals and objectives, and whether the operations or programs are being carried out as planned.
- Reviewing administrative and executive control systems established by the BOCC and other appropriate county officials to determine that such control systems are adequate and effective in accomplishing intended objectives.
- Auditing the County's outside revenue sources (including records of private organizations) to ensure that the County is receiving the proper amount of revenue.
- Reviewing and evaluating expenditures of County funds provided to other organizations (including private organizations) as appropriate.
- Investigating instances of suspected employee theft or loss, embezzlement, and fraud and assisting law enforcement authorities as appropriate. The County Audit Department should be notified of all such incidents.
- Conducting follow-up reviews on management letters of external certified public accounting firms in audits of the County or portions thereof.
- Conducting follow-up reviews of internal audit reports to determine whether recommendations have been implemented.
- Conducting audits and reviews not included in the annual audit plan as requested by the BOCC, County Administrator and other officials, as resources and priorities allow.
- Reviewing pertinent contracts, resolutions and ordinances to ensure adequate financial controls are provided.

#### PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Upon the request of the BOCC and the County Administrator and upon determination of appropriate available resources by the Clerk, the County Audit Department will conduct performance audits to review the economy and efficiency with which resources are employed to attain established goals and objectives. Where performance of the auditee's mission and objectives is involved, the County Administrator must be satisfied that the performance measures used for auditing are appropriate and that those conducting the audits are qualified to ascertain performance. Where the Clerk has been

involved or has offered comments on the development or implementation of procedures or activities, outside consultants or audit firms may be used to audit those activities or procedures.

**REPORTING ACCOUNTABILITIES**

A written report will be prepared by the County Audit Department and issued by the Clerk or the Director of County Audit following the conclusion of each audit and will be distributed as appropriate to the County Administrator or head of the auditee organization and to each County Commissioner. These reports will contain, as applicable, the response of the auditee to each audit recommendation.

In providing responses to the recommendations, twenty working days will be allowed from the exit conference in which the report will be presented and discussed. Extensions may be granted when deemed appropriate. Responses will be included in the report as written. The County Audit Department reserves the right, if necessary, to comment on any response. If responses are not received within the prescribed time period and no alternative arrangements are made, the report will be issued without responses.

APPROVED:

ACCEPTED:

*Frederick B. Karl*

Frederick B. Karl  
County Administrator

*Joe Chillura, Jr.*

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ JOE CHILLURA, JR.  
Vice Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners

APPROVED:

ATTEST: RICHARD AKE  
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

*Richard Ake*

Richard Ake  
Clerk of the Circuit Court

By: *Lindy W. Stanfield*  
DEPUTY CLERK

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY FLORIDA  
DOCUMENT NO. 91-1740