

**ATTESTATION REPORT
OF
LANCASTER COUNTY COURT**

JANUARY 1, 2017, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2017

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Issued on April 18, 2018

LANCASTER COUNTY COURT

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LANCASTER COUNTY COURT

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

During our examination of Lancaster County Court, we noted certain deficiencies and other operational matters that are presented here. The following comments are required to be reported in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*: Comment #1, “Segregation of Duties,” which is considered to be a material weakness.

These comments and recommendations are intended to improve the internal control over financial reporting or result in operational efficiencies in the following areas:

1. ***Segregation of Duties:*** One individual was capable of handling all phases of a transaction from beginning to end.
2. ***Unclaimed Property:*** The County Court did not report and remit trust balances over three years old to the State Treasurer, as required by State statute.

More detailed information on the above items is provided hereinafter. It should be noted that this report is critical in nature, as it contains only our comments and recommendations on the areas noted for improvement and does not include our observations on any accounting strengths of the County Court.

Draft copies of this report were furnished to the County Court to provide management with an opportunity to review the report and to respond to the comments and recommendations included in this report. All formal responses received have been incorporated into this report. Responses have been objectively evaluated and recognized, as appropriate, in the report. Responses that indicate corrective action has been taken were not verified at this time, but they will be verified in the next examination.

LANCASTER COUNTY COURT

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Segregation of Duties

Good internal control includes a plan of organization, procedures, and documentation designed to safeguard assets and provide reliable financial records. A system of internal control should include a proper segregation of duties, so no one individual is capable of handling all phases of a transaction from beginning to end.

We noted the office of the County Court lacked a sufficient segregation of duties. Specifically, one person was capable of handling all aspects of processing transactions from beginning to end, including access to and use of signature stamps by individuals whose name was not on the stamp. A lack of segregation of duties increases the risk of possible errors or irregularities. We have included this comment in previous examinations.

We recommend the County Court and the Nebraska State Court Administrator review this situation and implement good controls to reduce the risk of errors or irregularities.

County Court's Response: Lancaster County Court takes very seriously concerns about segregation of duties. We will continue to work to implement procedures to ensure good internal controls while operating efficiently. We have and will continue to work with the Administrative Office of the Courts to implement additional changes and controls.

2. Unclaimed Property

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 69-1307.01 (Reissue 2009), which is found in the Uniform Disposition of Unclaimed Property Act, presumes intangible personal property held by a court and unclaimed for more than three years to be abandoned. Neb. Rev. Stat. § 69-1310 (Reissue 2009), requires any property presumed abandoned, as of June 30 each year, to be reported and remitted to the State Treasurer by November 1 annually.

During the audit, it was noted that unclaimed property due to the State Treasurer by November 1, 2017, was not remitted until March 2, 2018. Specifically, 8 checks, totaling \$631, and 11 case balances, totaling \$3,318, were not remitted timely.

We recommend the County Court work to remit promptly to the State Treasurer all property in its possession that is presumed abandoned, as required by State statute.

County Court's Response: Upon learning of this oversight, Lancaster County Court's Presiding Judge, as well as the Administrative Office of the Court, were both notified of it. The report was submitted very shortly after that. Controls have been put in place to prevent such a thing from happening in the future.



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LANCASTER COUNTY COURT

INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT

Lancaster County Court
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

We have examined the accompanying Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions of the Lancaster County Court as of and for the period January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2017. The County Court's management is responsible for the Schedule based on the accounting system and procedures set forth in Note 1. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the Schedule based on our examination.

Our examination was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the standards applicable to attestation engagements contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we perform the examination to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Schedule is based on the accounting system and procedures set forth in Note 1, in all material respects. An examination involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions. The nature, timing, and extent of the procedures selected depend on our judgment, including an assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the Schedule, whether due to fraud or error. We believe that the evidence we obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions for the period January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2017, is based on the accounting system and procedures prescribed by the Nebraska Supreme Court, as set forth in Note 1, in all material respects.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we are required to report findings of deficiencies in internal control, violations of provisions of contracts or grant agreements, and abuse that are material to the Schedule and any fraud and illegal acts that are more than inconsequential that come to our attention during our examination. We are also required to obtain the views of management on those matters. We performed our examination to express an opinion on whether the Schedule is presented in accordance with the criteria described above and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the internal control over the Schedule or on compliance and other matters; accordingly we express no such opinions. Our examination disclosed a certain finding that is required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*, and that finding, along with the views of management, is described in the Comments Section of the report.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of management, the Supreme Court, others within the County Court, and the appropriate Federal and regulatory agencies, and it is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties. However, this report is a matter of public record, and its distribution is not limited.

April 17, 2018

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deann Haeffner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Deann Haeffner, CPA
Assistant Deputy Auditor
Lincoln, Nebraska

LANCASTER COUNTY COURT
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA
SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
ARISING FROM CASH TRANSACTIONS
AGENCY FUNDS

For the Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2017

	Balance January 1, 2017	Additions	Deductions	Balance December 31, 2017
ASSETS				
Cash and Deposits	\$ 1,194,198	\$ 10,972,669	\$ 10,738,185	\$ 1,428,682
 LIABILITIES				
Due to State Treasurer:				
Regular Fees	\$ 56,837	\$ 1,125,041	\$ 1,141,028	\$ 40,850
Law Enforcement Fees	6,130	127,526	128,800	4,856
State Judges Retirement Fund	24,698	541,311	542,804	23,205
Court Administrative Fees	31,361	694,177	697,340	28,198
Legal Services Fees	23,963	485,322	490,148	19,137
 Due to County Treasurer:				
Regular Fines	63,707	1,475,470	1,489,059	50,118
Overload Fines	6,601	121,244	121,845	6,000
Regular Fees	14,657	149,914	150,976	13,595
Petty Cash Fund	950	-	-	950
 Due to Municipalities:				
Regular Fines	81,257	2,151,661	2,147,275	85,643
Regular Fees	4,484	113,378	113,766	4,096
Trust Fund Payable	879,553	3,987,625	3,715,144	1,152,034
Total Liabilities	\$ 1,194,198	\$ 10,972,669	\$ 10,738,185	\$ 1,428,682

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the schedule.

LANCASTER COUNTY COURT
NOTES TO FINANCIAL SCHEDULE
For the Period Ended December 31, 2017

1. Criteria

A. Reporting Entity

The Lancaster County Court is established by State statute and is administratively operated through the Court Administrator's Office of the Nebraska Supreme Court, which is part of the State of Nebraska reporting entity. The Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions of the County Court reflect only the Agency Funds activity of the County Court, including the receipts and their subsequent disbursement to the appropriate entities for which they were collected. The Schedule does not reflect the personal services expenses of the County Court, which are paid by the Nebraska Supreme Court, or the operating expenses, which are paid by Lancaster County.

B. Basis of Accounting

The accounting records of the County Court Agency Funds are maintained, and the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions have been prepared, based on the accounting system and procedures prescribed by the Nebraska Supreme Court. Under this system of accounting, fines, fees, and receipts relating to trust funds are shown as additions to assets and as an increase in the related liability when received. Likewise, disbursements are shown as deductions to assets and as a decrease in the related liability when a check is written.

2. Deposits and Investments

Funds held by the County Court are deposited and invested in accordance with rules issued by the Supreme Court, as directed by Neb. Rev. Stat. § 25-2713 (Reissue 2016). Funds are generally consolidated in an interest-bearing checking account; however, the County Court may order certain trust funds to be invested separately. Any deposits in excess of the amount insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation are required by Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-2326.04 (Reissue 2009) to be secured either by a surety bond or as provided in the Public Funds Deposit Security Act.