



# **Audit of Eligibility for Certification Payments to Sheriff's Office Employees**

**Report Date: November 30, 2022**

Office of the Auditor-Controller  
County of Ventura, California  
Jeffery S. Burgh, Auditor-Controller

**County of Ventura**  
**AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**  
**MEMORANDUM**

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**To:** Honorable Bill Ayub, Sheriff

**Date:** November 30, 2022

**From:** Jeffery S. Burgh

**Subject:** **AUDIT OF ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTIFICATION PAYMENTS TO SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
EMPLOYEES**

We have completed our audit of eligibility for certification payments (Certification Pay) to Sheriff's Office employees. Our overall objective was to evaluate whether Certification Pay was paid only to eligible employees for the period of January 1 through June 30, 2022.

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### **Executive Summary**

Overall, we found that Certification Pay was paid only to eligible Sheriff's Office employees. For example, personnel files contained the proper documentation to authorize the payment of Certification Pay and certifications on file generally complied with requirements.

However, we identified an opportunity to improve management's oversight of the Certification Pay process. Specifically, we found:

- Management did not periodically ensure that employees receiving Certification Pay provided the required evidence of renewal for non-peace officer certifications.

Sheriff's Office management initiated corrective action to address our finding. Corrective action is planned to be completed by December 9, 2022.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance extended by you and your staff during this audit.

cc: Honorable Matt LaVere, Chair, Board of Supervisors  
Honorable Kelly Long, Vice Chair, Board of Supervisors  
Honorable Linda Parks, Board of Supervisors  
Honorable Robert O. Huber, Board of Supervisors  
Honorable Vianey Lopez, Board of Supervisors  
Sevet Johnson, Psy.D., County Executive Officer

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## Background

Permanent Ventura County Sheriff's Office employees who acquire and maintain certain certifications or licenses may be eligible for payments in addition to the employee's base pay (Certification Pay). To be eligible for Certification Pay, employees must meet the requirements outlined in the applicable bargaining unit's Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and provide proof that the certification or license meets the MOA requirements.

Over \$881,500 in Certification Pay was paid to 393 Sheriff's Office employees during the first half of calendar year 2022, which puts Sheriff's Office employees on track to be paid roughly \$1.8 million for the entire year.

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## Scope

Our overall objective was to determine whether Certification Pay was paid only to eligible employees for the period of January 1 through June 30, 2022. Specifically, we:

- determined whether employees who received Certification Pay complied with applicable MOA eligibility requirements; and
- verified that management provided adequate oversight for Certification Pay.

The audit was performed in conformance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* promulgated by The Institute of Internal Auditors.

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## Findings

Overall, we found that Certification Pay was paid only to eligible Sheriff's Office employees. For example:

- Personnel files contained the proper documentation to authorize the payment of Certification Pay.
- Of the 38 employees receiving Certification Pay selected for testing, 37 (97%) had appropriate certifications on file.
- Management provided appropriate oversight for employees' Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certifications and effectively monitored continuing professional training requirements.

However, we identified an opportunity to improve management oversight of the Certification Pay process by monitoring the expiration dates of non-POST certifications or licenses to ensure the documentation on file is appropriate.

Following are details of the area where improvement was needed. Sheriff's Office management initiated corrective action in response to the audit as noted.

## 1. Lack of Periodic Review for Non-POST Certifications

Management did not periodically verify that employees receiving Certification Pay provided the required evidence of renewal for non-POST certifications or licenses. During testing, we noted that the non-POST certificate on file for one employee had expired in 2021. Upon request, the employee provided evidence that the certificate had been appropriately renewed and covered the period under audit. Without periodic review procedures in place to ensure certificates and licenses are properly maintained, employees with expired certifications or licenses may continue to inappropriately receive Certification Pay.

**Recommendation.** Sheriff's Office management should monitor expiration dates of non-POST certifications or licenses subject to Certification Pay to ensure proof of renewal is provided by the employee prior to the expiration date. If the employee does not provide proof of renewal by the expiration date, prompt action should be taken to revoke Certification Pay.

**Management Action.** Sheriff's Office management stated: "Sheriff's Office management agrees with the auditor's recommendations and will implement the below corrective actions to ensure the required evidence of renewal for non-POST certifications or licenses are on file with the Sheriff's Office.

1. Track non-POST certificates or licenses by creating a Person Profile in VCHRP [Ventura County Human Resources/Payroll system] for each employee receiving Certification Pay.
2. Periodically monitor non-POST certificates or licenses renewals for each employee receiving Certification Pay.
3. Require each employee receiving non-POST Certification Pay to provide evidence of renewal certificates or licenses prior to the expiration date.
4. Discontinue Certification Pay if the non-POST renewal certificate is not received from the employee prior to the certificate expiration date."

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## Auditor's Evaluation of Management Action

We believe that management actions taken or planned were responsive to the audit finding. Sheriff's Office management planned to complete corrective action by December 9, 2022.