

EL DORADO COUNTY GRAND JURY 2019-2020



COUNTY VITAL RECORDS CERTIFICATE FEES WHY SO EXPENSIVE?

CASE 19-05 • JUNE 8, 2020

Public Release

JUNE 15, 2020

EL DORADO COUNTY 2019-2020 GRAND JURY
COUNTY VITAL RECORDS CERTIFICATE FEES-WHY SO EXPENSIVE?
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A citizen expressed concern to the Grand Jury that the cost of obtaining a certified birth certificate seemed unusually high for a simple piece of paper.

BACKGROUND

The elected El Dorado County Recorder is responsible for recording and maintaining many types of public records. Among them are vital records of birth, death and marriage. Retrieving a certified copy of a vital record is a straightforward process that includes paying a fee.

METHODOLOGY

Documents Reviewed

- Listing of vital records certificate cost breakdown
- Agreement for Services contract between Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) and El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE) for Child Abuse Prevention Council Activities
- Various County invoices

Interviewed

- Various El Dorado County elected officials
- Various EDCOE employees

DISCUSSION

Attachment A is the El Dorado County Recorder Fee Schedule - a complete listing of fees for documents and services provided by the Recorder's office, including vital records.

The amount a county can charge for vital record certificates is set by the State of California. There are four vital records, each having a different fee:

Vital Record Certificate	Fee (\$)
Death	21.00
Fetal Death	18.00
Marriage	15.00
Birth	28.00

Vital record fees are composed of a base fee plus additional components allocated to various agencies.

Death Certificate fee components and allocations

Death Certificate Fee Component (\$)		(\$) Component Allocation	
Base fee authorized by the State	14.00	2.10 11.90	State Registrar County Recorder
Mandatory Vital Statistics Trust Fund surcharge	4.00	1.80 2.20	State Registrar Local Vital Statistics Trust Fund
Develop safety & security measures to protect against fraudulent use of birth & death only SB 247	1.00	0.65 0.35	State Registrar Local Vital Statistics Trust Fund
Mandatory Missing Persons DNA Data Base Fund	2.00	1.90 0.10	Department of Justice County Recorder
	21.00	21.00	

Fetal Death Certificate fee components and allocations

Fetal Death Certificate Fee Component (\$)		(\$) Component Allocation	
Base fee authorized by the State	14.00	2.10 11.90	State Registrar County Recorder
Mandatory Vital Statistics Trust Fund surcharge	4.00	1.80 2.20	State Registrar Local Vital Statistics Trust Fund
	18.00	18.00	

Marriage Certificate fee components and allocations

Marriage Certificate Fee Component (\$)		(\$) Component Allocation	
Base fee authorized by the State	6.00	0.90 5.10	State Registrar County Recorder
Mandatory Vital Statistics Trust Fund surcharge	4.00	1.80 2.20	State Registrar Local Vital Statistics Trust Fund
Develop safety & security measures to protect against fraudulent use of birth & death only SB 247	1.00	0.65 0.35	State Registrar Local Vital Statistics Trust Fund
Per H&S 103625(c) and H&S 100425	4.00	3.60 0.40	State Registrar County Recorder
	15.00	15.00	

Birth Certificate fee components and allocations

Fees charged for Birth Certificates are the highest and most complex of Vital Records. The Grand Jury explored them in more detail to explain the costs associated with Vital Records fees. The chart below summarizes fees charged for Birth Certificates by component and component allocation to various agencies.

Birth Certificate Fee Component (\$)		(\$) Component Allocation	
Base fee authorized by the State	14.00	2.10 11.90	State Registrar County Recorder
Mandatory Vital Statistics Trust Fund surcharge	4.00	1.80 2.20	State Registrar Local Vital Statistics Trust Fund
Develop safety & security measures to protect against fraudulent use of birth & death only SB 247	1.00	0.65 0.35	State Registrar Local Vital Statistics Trust Fund
Mandatory Children's Trust Fund surcharge	4.00	3.60 0.40	County Children's Trust Fund Retained by Recorder
Umbilical Cord Blood Collection	2.00	2.00	Umbilical Cord Blood Collection
*Optional additional Children's Trust Fund surcharge authorized by the State	3.00	2.70 0.30	County Children's Trust Fund County Recorder
	28.00	28.00	

It should be noted that \$25 of the \$28 Birth Certificate fee is mandated by the State. The County has elected to charge the ***optional** additional \$3 Children's Trust Fund surcharge authorized by the state.

Fee (\$)	Birth Certificate Component Allocation
12.60	County Recorder
6.30	County Children's Trust Fund
4.55	State Registrar
2.55	Local Vital Statistics Trust Fund
2.00	Umbilical Cord Blood Collection
28.00	

Birth Certificate Component Allocations

County Recorder and State Registrar fees are used to offset the cost of record generation and maintenance including staff, facility, equipment and general office costs.

Umbilical Cord Blood Collection fee is mandated by California statute. It is sent to the State.

County's Children's Trust Fund is administered by the County Health and Human Services Administration (HHSA), accumulating approximately \$20,000 - \$25,000 per year. HHSA has contracted with the El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE) to provide a community-based child abuse prevention program funded with the Children's Trust Fund in addition to Federal and State funds. The contract with EDCOE was originally entered on April 9, 2002 and has been routinely renewed for three-year periods, most recently in August 2017. The Grand Jury reviewed a selected number of invoices submitted by EDCOE to HHSA for services provided in fiscal year 2018-2019. The services provided by EDCOE appeared to be following the contract.

Local Vital Statistics Trust Fund is, by statute, "...for the purpose of defraying the administration costs of collecting and reporting with respect to those fees." The trust fund is administered and allocated at the direction of the County Recorder. In fiscal year 2018-2019, the trust funds were used to reimburse the Recorder's office for certificate paper of a specific thickness and texture, document management and a small portion of staff costs.

ATTACHMENT

A - *El Dorado County Recorder Fee Schedule*

FINDINGS

- F1. The County collects fees for recording and maintaining vital statistic certificates.
- F2. Fees collected are mandated by State statute and designated for various purposes.
- F3. The *Local Vital Statistics Trust Fund* is administered by the County Recorder.
- F4. The *Children's Trust Fund* is administered by HHSA through a contract with EDCOE.
- F5. A community-based child abuse prevention program funded with the Children's Trust Fund justifies the optional County charge of \$3 for a Birth Certificate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury has no recommendations.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Responses to this report are invited but are not required nor requested.

EL DORADO RECORDER FEE SCHEDULE

Effective January 1, 2020

COUNTY RECORDER - RECORDING FEES		
Code References: B&P = Business & Professions Code; CC = Civil Code; FC = Family Code; F&G = Fish & Game Code; GC = Government Code; H&S = Health & Safety Code; R&T = Revenue & Taxation Code; UCC = Uniform Commercial Code		
	Code Reference	Fee
Regular Recording Fee	GC 27361 & 27361.4	
1 st Page (8 ½ X 11) & Title	GC 27361 & 27361.4	\$16.00
Each Additional Page	GC 27361 & 27361.4	\$3.00
Each Additional Title	GC 27361.1 & 27361.4	\$16.00
Documentary Transfer Tax paid deduct \$2.00	GC 27388	-\$2.00
Documentary Transfer Tax \$0.55/per \$500	R&T 11911	\$0.55
SB2 Affordable Housing and Job Act Fee. Some exemptions apply and must be stated on the face page of the document	GC 27388.1 (Maximum \$225)	\$75.00
Uniformity Penalty	GC 27361(a)(2)	\$3.00
Release of State or County Tax Liens	GC 27361, 27361.3 & 27383	
Base Recording fee		\$20.00
Each Additional Page		\$ 3.00
Financing Statements	UCC 9407(1)(2)(3)	
U.C.C. 2 pages or less - \$10.00 + \$2.00 REFF=		\$12.00
U.C.C. 3 pages or more \$20.00 + \$2.00 REFF=		\$22.00
Notification of Involuntary Lien per debtor	GC 27387	\$10.00
Additional indexing – each additional reference	GC 27361.2	\$3.00
Additional indexing – Each 10 names after initial 10 names	GC 27361.8	\$5.00
Map Filings for Record	GC 27372	
1 st Page Subdivision, Parcel , Survey & Assessment Maps		\$14.00
Each Additional Page		\$3.00
Penalty Print	GC 27361	\$1.00
Preliminary 20-Day Filing	GC 27361.9 & CC 3097	\$45.00
Documents recorded without Preliminary Change of Ownership Report	R&T 408.3	\$20.00
COUNTY RECORDER - COPIES		
Official Record Copies	GC 27366	
1 st Page		\$3.00
Each Additional Page		\$1.00
Certification		\$2.00
Conformed Copies		No Fee
Provided one copy with a Self-Addressed, STAMPED Envelope is enclosed.		
Assessor Plat Map	GC 27366	\$1.50
Parcel or Subdivision Map or Record of Survey – 1st page	GC 27366	\$3.00
Each additional pages of Parcel or Subdivision Map or Record of Survey		\$1.00
Official Records Daily Image & Index Subscription		\$430.00/mo
CERTIFIED COPIES OF VITALS OR CERTIFIED SEARCH OF RECORD		
Birth Record	H&S 103625(b)(1)	\$28.00
Death Record	H&S 103625(a)	\$21.00
Fetal Death Record	H&S 103625(a)	\$18.00
Marriage Record	H&S 103625(c)	\$15.00

COUNTY CLERK – CERTIFICATION & COPIES		
Photocopying a document per page	GC 26831	\$0.50
Certifying a copy prepared by County Clerk	GC 26831.2	\$2.25
Every Certificate for which the fee is not otherwise fixed	GC 26836	\$10.00
Certification to the official capacity of a public official or notary	GC 26852	\$10.00
Certificate of Foreign Language Translation per page	GC 27293	\$10.00
COUNTY CLERK – ENVIRONMENTAL FILINGS		
Fish & Wildlife Administrative Fee	F&G 711 et. Seq	\$50.00
COUNTY CLERK – FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAMES		
Fictitious Business Name Statement	B&P 17929(a)	
One business name and one owner includes one certified copy		\$40.00
One business name and filing as a “married couple”		\$40.00
Additional business names or owners	B&P 17929(b)	\$7.00
Abandonment of Fictitious Business Name Statement	B&P 17929(c)	\$35.00
Withdrawal of Partnership operating under FBN	B&P 17929(d)	\$35.00
Certified Copy of any statement on file	B&P 17929(b)	\$2.25
COUNTY CLERK – MARRIAGES – ISSUED BY APPOINTMENT ONLY		
Public, Declaration or Non-clergy Marriage License	GC 26840.3 & 26840.7	\$80.00
Confidential Marriage License	GC 26840.1, 26840.3 & 26840.8	\$85.00
Duplicate Marriage License	FC 360(c)	\$25.00
Marriage Solemnization (In Office by appointment only)	GC 26861	\$40.00
Deputy Commissioner of Civil Marriages (One Time)	GC 54985	\$50.00
Provide a witness for a civil ceremony	GC 54985	\$5.00
Annual Notary Public Authorization to issue Confidential Licenses	FC 530-536	\$300.00
COUNTY CLERK – MISCELLANEOUS		
Filing Financial Statement of Admitted Surety	GC 26855.2	\$3.50
Issuing a certificate re-justification of sureties per CCP 995.640	GC 26855.3	\$5.00
Filing a Power of Attorney, Notice of cancellation, Revocation or Withdrawal of Power of Attorney for an admitted surety per name	GC 26855.1 & 26855.3	\$15.00
Filing and Indexing all papers – For which a charge is not elsewhere provided, other than papers filed in actions or special proceedings, official bonds or certificates of appointment	GC 26850	\$10.00
COUNTY CLERK – REGISTRATIONS		
Notary Oath - Requires posting \$15,000 Bond plus recording bond fees (See Recording Fees)	GC 26849.1	\$35.00
Process Server – Requires posting \$2,000 bond or cash. Plus \$10.00 for ID Card and recording bond fees	B&P 22352 & 22353	\$100.00
Professional Photocopier - Requires posting \$5,000 bond or cash. Plus \$10.00 for ID Card and recording bond fees	B&P 22453 & 22453.1	\$175.00
If applicant is a registered process server	B&P 22350	\$100.00
Unlawful Detainer Assistant/Legal Document Assistant - Requires posting \$25,000 bond or cash. Plus \$10.00 for ID Card and recording bond fees	B&P 6404 & 6405(c)	\$175.00
Identification Card	B&P 22352 & 22453	\$10.00