



**Hillsborough
County** Florida

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County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan

County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan Cover Memo



Hillsborough
County Florida

TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Melinda Jenzarli, CPA, CIA, CISA, CFE, MBA, County Internal Auditor
DATE: September 17, 2025
SUBJECT: County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan

A comprehensive risk assessment and audit planning process was developed to optimize the allocation of resources within the County Internal Auditor's Office across a broad range of auditable areas within the organizational framework of the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). This strategic process was conducted in conformance with the *Global Internal Audit Standards*™. This report outlines the methodology for selecting assurance and advisory services for the County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan. The Plan serves as a core guide for audit services to be initiated during the calendar year 2026.

On August 28, 2025, the County Internal Audit Committee recommended that the BOCC accept this 2026 Annual Audit Plan. On September 17, 2025, the BOCC considered the County Internal Audit Committee's recommendation and accepted the 2026 Annual Audit Plan.

Sincerely,

Melinda Jenzarli

Copy: County Internal Audit Committee
Christine Beck, County Attorney
Debora Cromartie-Mincey, Chief Assistant County Attorney
Tom Fesler, Chief Financial Administrator
Carl Harness, Chief Human Services Administrator
Greg Horwedel, Deputy County Administrator
Ramin Kouzehkanani, Chief Information & Innovation Officer
Liana Lopez, Chief Communications Administrator
Brandon Wagner, Chief Government Relations and Strategic Services Administrator
Bonnie Wise, County Administrator

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County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan

Introduction

To ensure the most efficient and effective utilization of the County Internal Auditor's Office's resources, areas selected for audit services must be carefully considered. Since the audit function, like other government functions, should provide the maximum possible benefit to Hillsborough County's citizens, audit services that will result in the most benefit should be conducted. A comprehensive risk assessment and audit planning process was developed to optimize the allocation of resources within the County Internal Auditor's Office across a broad range of auditable areas within the organizational framework of the County. This strategic process was conducted to determine the 2026 Annual Audit Plan. The methodology of selecting assurance and advisory services for the County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan is presented below.

Audit Services Selected for the 2026 Annual Audit Plan

Audit services selected for the County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan were derived from a variety of sources. These include risk assessments, commissioner and/or management requests, Resolution R20-011 requirements, Hillsborough County Home Rule Charter Section 4.10 requirements, and the *Global Internal Audit Standards*™ requirements. Risk was the primary factor in selecting projects for the 2026 Annual Audit Plan. Risks in some areas of the County are higher than others for many reasons, including the number of years since the last audit and/or externally scrutinized / monitored; operational impact; outsourced processes; and awareness or suspicion of fraud, theft, or waste. Those areas of the County that are higher in risk will receive more audit services than those of lower risk. However, the areas of lower risk were not ignored; rather, they will receive audit services less frequently or more narrowly scoped than the higher risk areas. In addition to risk, commissioners and/or management occasionally request audit services to address potential concerns or to provide advisory services that focus on improving existing operations and identifying future opportunities. Because the County Internal Auditor's Office functions as a business partner, commissioner and management requests are seriously considered in the selection of audit services. As part of the risk assessment and planning process, the County Internal Auditor solicited input from commissioners, executive staff, senior staff, second-line managers, the Clerk of Circuit Court's Chief Audit Executive, Cherry Bekaert LLP Partner, the County Internal Audit Committee, and others.

County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan

Independence Confirmation and Performance Objectives

Purpose of Internal Auditing (*Global Internal Auditor Standards™ Domain I: Purpose of Internal Auditing*)

Internal auditing strengthens the organization's ability to create, protect, and sustain value by providing the board and management with independent, risk-based, and objective assurance, advice, insight, and foresight. Internal auditing enhances the organization's Successful achievement of its objectives; Governance, risk management, and control processes; Decision-making and oversight; Reputation and credibility with its stakeholders; and Ability to serve the public interest.

Internal auditing is most effective when:

- It is performed by competent professionals in conformance with the *Global Internal Audit Standards™*, which are set in the public interest.
- The internal audit function is independently positioned with direct accountability to the board.
- Internal auditors are free from undue influence and committed to making objective assessments.

Organizational Independence (*Global Internal Audit Standard™: 7.1 Organizational Independence*)

As the County Internal Auditor, I will provide assurance and advisory services on behalf of the BOCC for various County functions and activities under county administration. The County Internal Auditor's Office reports directly to the BOCC and is not administratively or functionally under the County Administrator. The BOCC is responsible for approving the following:

- The internal audit charter.
- The risk-based internal audit plan.
- The budget for the County Internal Auditor's Office.
- Decisions regarding the appointment and removal of the County Internal Auditor.
- The compensation of the County Internal Auditor.

Additionally, I will provide the BOCC with direct communications regarding the performance of the County Internal Auditor's Office in relation to the annual audit plan and other relevant matters.

Performance Objectives (*Global Internal Audit Standards™: 12.2 Performance Measurement | 8.3 Quality*)

The County Internal Auditor discussed the performance objectives of the County Internal Auditor's Office with each member of the BOCC during the 2025 mid-year status report briefings. The BOCC will approve these performance objectives along with its acceptance of the 2026 Annual Audit Plan. The County Internal Auditor will report to the BOCC on the achievement of these performance objectives in the Annual Accomplishments Report.

- **Facilitate Government Accountability:** Positively impact organizational changes and processes through independent, fact-based, objective assessment of County programs, activities, and functions to increase assurance that public resources are used in an effective, responsible, and efficient manner.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Increase fiscal efficiency by identifying waste and duplication while recommending streamlined processes that assist the effectiveness of County programs, activities, and/or functions.
- **Audit Committee:** Maintain a positive relationship with the County Internal Audit Committee.
- **Delivery of High-Quality Audit Services:** Develop the most effective and efficient means of accomplishing the County Internal Auditor's Office's core mission, to deliver high-quality audit services.

County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan Risk Assessment Methodology

Independent External Quality Assessment (EQA)

Review

EQA report issued 7/20/22

Conclusion

Generally Conforms
(*highest rating*)

Conclusion Comment

"No conformance gaps," and "A comprehensive Quality Assurance and Improvement Program."

The next independent EQA is planned in 2027.

County Internal Auditor's Risk Assessment Components

The risk assessment process combines information obtained from narratives, internal control questionnaires, management self-assessment surveys, current events, unauthorized purchase reports, performance of audit services, and communications with commissioners, executive staff, senior staff, and second-line management. The County Internal Auditor's Office also considered risk information derived from the Clerk of Circuit Court's Chief Audit Executive and a Cherry Bekaert LLP Partner.

The annual risk assessment is a cumulative process. Utilizing the Auto-Audit software's risk library (which contains 43 auditable entities and 131 activities), the County Internal Auditor's Office assessed the risks associated with each entity based on the eight risk factors below:

- External Risks
- Financial Risks
- Supply Risks
- Management Risks
- Data Security Risks
- Health and Safety Risks
- Managing Complexity Risks
- Operational Risks

Each year, the risk library builds upon the prior year and will continue to compile greater detail of the County's risks.

The risk assessment methodology performed was in conformance with the *Global Internal Audit Standards*™.

County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan Emerging Risks

Throughout the year, the County Internal Auditor identifies and considers emerging risks that may have a material impact on County operations and programs.

Throughout 2025, the County was impacted by:

- Impacts of sea level rise, intensified storms, and flooding.
- Capital deployment for infrastructure needs.
- Elevated inflation, insurance premiums, and claims costs.
- Challenges with labor skills availability and fewer bids.
- Delays in the supply chain and projects.
- Technology shifts and AI adoption.
- Cybersecurity threats.
- High rates of automobile accidents, animal shelters exceeding their capacity, and the prevalence of sidewalk slip and fall incidents.
- Federal and state regulatory and funding changes.

The highest risks for 2026 fall into eight key categories: external, financial, supply, management, data security, health & safety, managing complexity, and operational risk. An emerging risks table is located on the next page.

County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan High Risk Areas

Risk Categories	Risk Comments
External	Community impacts of sea level rise, intensified storms, and flooding.
Financial	High funding demands for infrastructure improvements, including transportation systems, roads, bridges, sidewalks, and fire stations. Impact of elevated inflation: Increase in cost of supplies, equipment/vehicles, and contracted work. Rising cost of insurance premiums and claims: health, cybersecurity, and property.
Supply	Labor supply shortage / labor skills availability. Supply chain constraints and projects delays. Decrease in bids received / less competition.
Management	Managing work expectations, including hours, benefits, location, etc., while continuing to provide high-quality services to citizens.
Data Security	Adoption of AI: integrity of data ingested, correct interpretation / analysis of output, managing / securing data. The high demand for technology solutions, cybersecurity, and resilience remains a high priority.
Health & Safety	Automobile accidents continue to occur at a high rate. Preparation, response, and recovery from natural disasters remain a top priority. Animal shelters are at or exceeding maximum capacity, raising the risk of disease transmission. Sidewalk slips and falls remain prevalent. Library public safety and security concerns.
Managing Complexity	Oracle Cloud Redwood user interface continued updates. Accela implementation for site development and subdivision permitting processes.
Operational	Increase in demand for digital library content. Operational impacts of reduced federal / state grant funding on staffing levels and services. Florida Statute 218.755 – Prompt Processing of Change Orders.

County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan Coordination, Development, Review, and Acceptance

Sharing Information and Coordinating Efforts

In planning the 2026 Annual Audit Plan, the County Internal Auditor's Office collaborated with various internal and external assurance and consulting providers. This included engaging with first and second-line management, the Clerk of the Circuit Court's Chief Audit Executive, and a partner from Cherry Bekaert LLP. This collaborative approach ensures comprehensive coverage of the auditable environment while avoiding any duplication of efforts.

County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan Development

The 2026 Annual Audit Plan was developed after a comprehensive review of the risk assessment results, audit resource allocation, and audit requests. The 2026 Annual Audit Plan is a planning tool that allows the County Internal Auditor's Office to use its resources effectively. Therefore, it may be adjusted throughout the year as the auditable environment changes.

County Internal Audit Committee's Review and the BOCC's Acceptance of the 2026 Annual Audit Plan

The County Internal Audit Committee reviewed the 2026 Annual Audit Plan and provided input. The Committee determined that the County Internal Auditor performed an annual risk assessment, based on her own judgment of risks after consideration of input from executive staff and the commissioners, and after sharing information and coordinating with other internal and external providers of assurance and advisory services.

The Committee also determined that the County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan's hours (resource requirements) align with the available resource budget. Therefore, pursuant to Resolution R20-011, on August 28, 2025, the County Internal Audit Committee recommended that the BOCC accept the 2026 Annual Audit Plan. On September 17, 2025, the BOCC considered the Committee's recommendation and accepted the 2026 Annual Audit Plan.

County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan

Assurance Services (Plan A)

Affordable Housing Multi-Family Agreement
Economic Development Grant Programs Management Activities
Fire Rescue Emergency Response Record Keeping
Head Start Educational Services Agreement
Sunshine Line Resident Transportation Services
Temporary Traffic Control (TTC) Permitting Process
Solid Waste Residential Assessments Process Monitoring
Mobility Fee Program Monitoring*
Fire Inspection Program Monitoring*
Library Materials Management Monitoring*

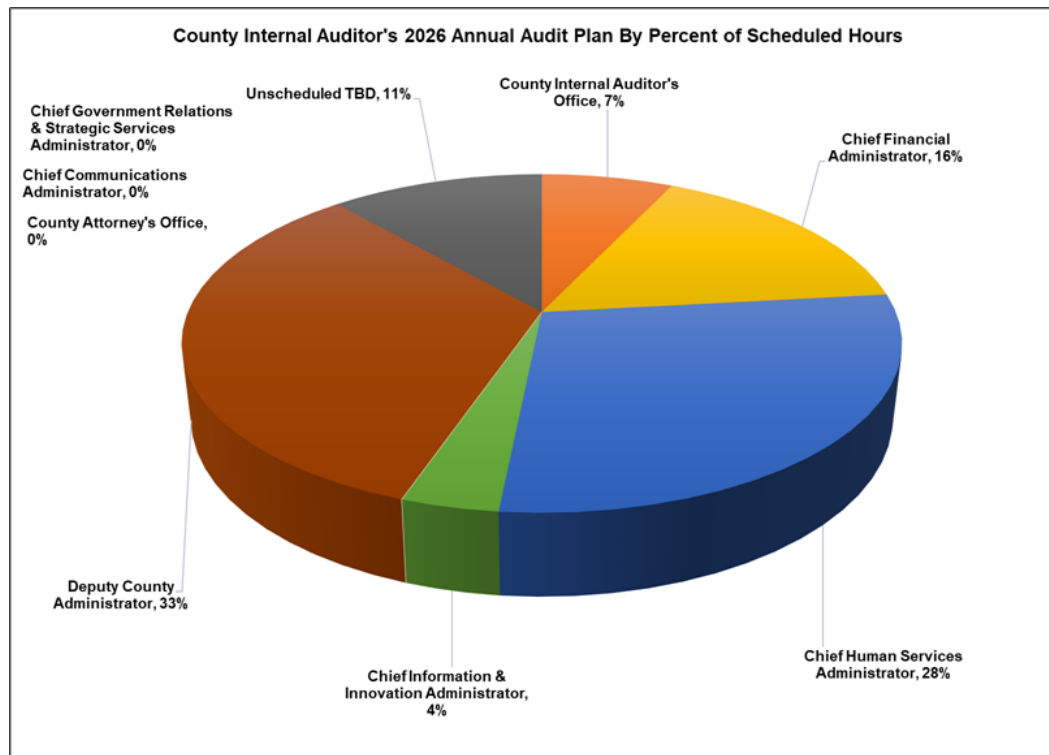
**Projects included in the 2025 Annual Audit Plan that still need to be completed. As of September 2025, it is to be determined whether a monitoring project will be performed in 2026.*

Assurance Services (Plan B)

Cyber Security Related Activity
Fleet Replacement Program

Administrative Projects and Advisory Services

Annual Risk Assessment and Planning for 2027
Artificial Intelligence Adoption and Implementation Strategy
Internal Quality Assessment (IQA)
Library Services Digital Resources Dashboard
Pet Resource Center Continuous Data Analytics
Property Insurance and Claims
Cone of Silence Investigations | Services To Be Determined



County Internal Auditor's 2026 Annual Audit Plan County Internal Audit Committee Recommendation Letter



**Hillsborough
County Florida**

County Internal Audit Committee

Awni Asab
Gina d'Angelo
Kevin Langley
Sean Robinson
James Shepard

County Internal Auditor

Melinda Jenzarli, MBA, CPA, CIA, CISA, CFE

Board of County Commissioners

Chris Boles
Donna Cameron Cepeda
Harry Cohen
Ken Hagan
Christine Miller
Gwendolyn "Gwen" W. Myers
Joshua Wostal

County Administrator

Bonnie M. Wise
County Attorney
Christine Beck

DATE: August 28, 2025
TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Gina d'Angelo, County Internal Audit Committee Chair 
SUBJECT: County Internal Auditor's Office 2026 Annual Audit Plan

Dear Board Members,

Pursuant to Board of County Commission Resolution R20-011, the County Internal Audit Committee is responsible for commenting to the Board of County Commission whether the County Internal Auditor performed an annual risk assessment based on her own judgment of risks after consideration of input from senior management and the Commissioners, and after sharing information and coordinating with other internal and external providers of assurance and consulting services, as applicable. The Audit Committee is also responsible for considering if the County Internal Auditor's resources (management of resource requirements available to effectively deploy the plan) align with the annual audit plan budget and then forwarding the annual plan to the Board of County Commission with the Audit Committee's comments for approval.

After gaining an understanding of the process utilized by the County Internal Auditor to perform the 2026 annual risk assessment, the Audit Committee concluded that the County Internal Auditor met the above referenced requirements in Resolution R20-011. Therefore, the Audit Committee recommends the Board of County Commission accept the 2026 Annual Audit Plan.

Should the Board of County Commission need additional information, please feel free to contact me directly at 813-841-3157 or via email at ginad57@pm.me.

Copy: County Internal Audit Committee, file
DeBora Cromartie-Mincey, Chief Assistant County Attorney