

Commissioner Explainer

Why Align IT Administrative Oversight with the County Auditor?

Summary

The County IT Department supports every office, every elected official, and every critical system. As the County has grown, technology has shifted from a back-office support function to a core operational, compliance, cybersecurity, and risk-management function.

Aligning IT administrative supervision with the County Auditor improves accountability, transparency, consistency, audit readiness, and risk management without changing who controls County policy or budget decisions.

What Would Change

- The IT Director would report administratively to the County Auditor.
- The County Auditor would serve as the primary administrative supervisor for coordination, escalation, operational accountability, and evaluation.
- An IT Advisory Committee would provide structured input and transparency across departments and elected offices.
- Written standards would be formally recognized as the basis for secure, supportable, County-wide technology operations.

What Would Not Change

- IT remains a County department.
- Commissioners Court retains budgetary and strategic policy authority.
- The IT Director remains responsible for daily operations and technical decisions.
- Judges do not supervise IT staff or direct IT operations.
- Departments keep control over their business processes, records, and statutory duties.
- The Advisory Committee does not approve, veto, or manage IT operations.

Why the Auditor Is the Right Administrative Fit

The County Auditor already operates in the County-wide space of internal controls, compliance, documentation, financial stewardship, risk management, and operational consistency. Modern IT directly affects each of those areas.

This alignment gives the County a more natural administrative home for IT oversight while keeping elected officials, departments, and Commissioners Court properly involved in policy, budget, and operational priorities.

Benefits to Commissioners Court

- Clearer accountability for IT decisions and escalation.
- Fewer operational technology disputes coming directly to Court.
- Better long-term budgeting and lifecycle planning.
- Reduced risk exposure from cybersecurity incidents, CJIS compliance gaps, election system concerns, and vendor-managed systems.
- A documented structure that can survive staff turnover and future growth.

Benefits to Departments and Elected Officials

- More consistent service delivery and support expectations.
- Clearer technology standards and exception processes.
- Better audit preparation and documentation.
- Improved coordination for major changes affecting multiple offices.
- A formal advisory channel without creating another approval bottleneck.

Bottom Line

This change strengthens oversight without centralizing political power. It clarifies roles, reduces risk, improves audit readiness, and modernizes County operations while preserving the authority of Commissioners Court and the independence of elected offices.