**Wording Your Findings**

Most findings are presented as a list of problems, criticisms, assessments, or judgments. Findings become more powerful when they include cause and effect, pointing out the consequence resulting from the identified problem. If a grand jury concludes that an entity is operating exceptionally well, it can make a positive finding or a commendation (but not a recommendation, as no corrective action is needed).

Here are some words and phrases you might use in your findings, whether critical or positive.

**Negative findings – words of judgment:**

Failed, failure, refused

Inadequate, unsuccessful, ineffective, impractical, unusable, unnecessary, unable

Insufficient, inefficient, defective, substandard, poorly

Incomplete, unfinished, inconsistent

Lack of, loss, depletion

Liable, exposure to liability, exposure to litigation

Not accountable, not transparent

Outdated, old, stale, untimely, late, tardy, slow

Shortfall, shortage, missing

Unclear, vague, confusing, inaccurate

Unsafe, dangerous, hazardous

Unsanitary, neglected, deteriorating

Violated (a statute, ordinance, or policy), unlawful, illegal, noncompliant

Wasteful, uneconomical, unreasonable, too expensive

**Negative findings – words that show cause and effect**:

As a result, resulting in, concluded in

Caused, created, prompted

Generated, yielded, gave rise to, led to

*Finding*: The district failed to maintain the levee.

*Better finding*: The district’s failure to maintain the levee resulted in the flooding of six homes.

**Words in positive findings**:

Comprehensive, extensive, thorough

Excellent, outstanding, extraordinary, exemplary, exceptional

Effective, efficient, productive, worthwhile, beneficial, helpful

Innovative, inventive, creative, state-of-the-art

*Example*: The County Elections Office kept the vote-counting process free from potential fraud.