

THE AUDITOR'S REPORT



News & Updates

from the Office of the State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump

Making government work better



Suzanne M. Bump
State Auditor



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Dear Friend,

From medical care to food assistance, many Massachusetts residents count on public benefits programs to help make ends meet. As Bay Staters, we recognize the value of these programs for our fellow residents, friends and family members, but we also want to make sure the programs are run with integrity and accountability.

For quite some time, my office has investigated and identified fraud in our public benefits programs. We do this because we know that every dollar fraudulently received by an individual who is not eligible is a dollar not going to a family for whom it means the difference between a preventive doctor's appointment and ending up in the emergency room.

But, I know that with the talents and technology in this agency, there is more we can do. This is why, earlier this month, I announced an expansion of our work to strengthen the social safety net. Through this initiative, we will bolster our efforts by developing strategic partnerships with other state and federal agencies that do similar work, and using sophisticated data analytics tools to focus on the worst perpetrators of fraud, with special attention on providers who defraud these systems—and fail the individuals who depend on them.

Finally, we know that identifying fraud is only one step in strengthening our social safety net. We must also ensure that those who need and are eligible for public assistance can actually access it. It's with this in mind, that in the coming year, my office will begin an audit to identify the barriers that prevent individuals and families from accessing benefits.

We all have a stake in preserving a strong safety net, and I'm pleased that my office is stepping up to strengthen these important programs.

Thank you,

Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth

Recent Audits

[Nonotuck Resource Associates Inc.](#)

[Northern Essex Community College](#)

[Westfield State University](#)

[MBTA—Trade Accounts Receivable](#)

[Massachusetts Gaming Commission](#)

[View more audits](#)

Recent Press Releases

[Audit Finds MBTA not Collecting, Reconciling Outstanding Balances](#)

[Gaming Commission not Ensuring Casino Workforce Development Requirements Met](#)

[Bump Focuses Efforts to Strengthen Public Benefits Programs](#)

[View more releases](#)

Upcoming Events

Auditor Bump speaks at the annual State House Menorah Lighting, Wednesday, December 21 at 4 p.m., Massachusetts State House, Boston



Auditor Bump spoke to members of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees about the work of the OSA and the Division of Local Mandates at their annual Day on the Hill in April.

OSA Focus: A Look Back at 2016

When 2016 comes to a close, most Bay Staters will remember the year for its contentious elections—and maybe the deaths of music legends.

However, for the Office of the State Auditor, 2016 will be remembered as a year in which our work influenced some of the biggest policy issues in our state. We [added our unmatched data analytics tools](#) to a collaborative working group aimed at cracking down on illegal prescribing of opioids. Through our audits, we contributed to criminal justice reform discussions related to fines [and fees assessed on people charged with or convicted of crimes](#). We not only had another [record-setting year](#) of identification of public benefits fraud, we also announced an expansion of our efforts in this realm. For the first time ever, we [released a report](#) looking at the fiscal impacts of legislation on local governments, and are enthusiastic about the commitment from lawmakers to address these impacts. And our work was [consistently cited](#) in the debate about raising the cap on charter schools in the state.

2016 also shined a national spotlight on the work of the OSA: our work was recognized by the [National State Auditors Association](#) for excellence in accountability for efforts to combat fraud in the MassHealth program; one of our innovative data analytics tools received an award from the [National Association of Chief Information Officers](#) for its impact improving state government operations; the entire agency [received the Einhorn-Gary Award](#) for its contributions to furthering government accountability—the first time ever the award was given to an entire agency rather than an individual; and Auditor Bump was appointed to serve on the U.S. Government Accountability Office's Domestic Working group to improve government accountability.

The new year brings opportunity to not only build on these successes, but also to continue to innovate and transform our work to make government work better.

Happy New Year!

OSA's Work Makes Headlines

[Auditor Suzanne Bump hopes to identify barriers to accessing welfare benefits](#)

The Springfield Republican covers the OSA's initiative to strengthen public benefits, including identifying barriers to accessing the programs.

[State Gambling Audit Pays Off](#)

Wicked Local Quincy uses the OSA's audit of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission to highlight the need for benchmarks and monitoring to ensure compliance with its workforce development goal at Plainridge Park.



Auditor Bump (right) leads a presentation on OSA's data analytics tools during the Inspectors General Annual Conference in Boston on November 17. Pictured, from left are: OSA's Assistant Director for Data Analytics Brian Scheetz, OSA IT Director Nick Velonis, and State Comptroller Thomas Shack.

[State Auditor's office uncovered record-setting welfare fraud](#)

WWLP-22 News reports on the Bureau of Special Investigations annual report, which identified a record \$15.4 million in public benefits fraud in fiscal year 2016.

[After charter school defeat, what's next for Massachusetts education reform?](#)

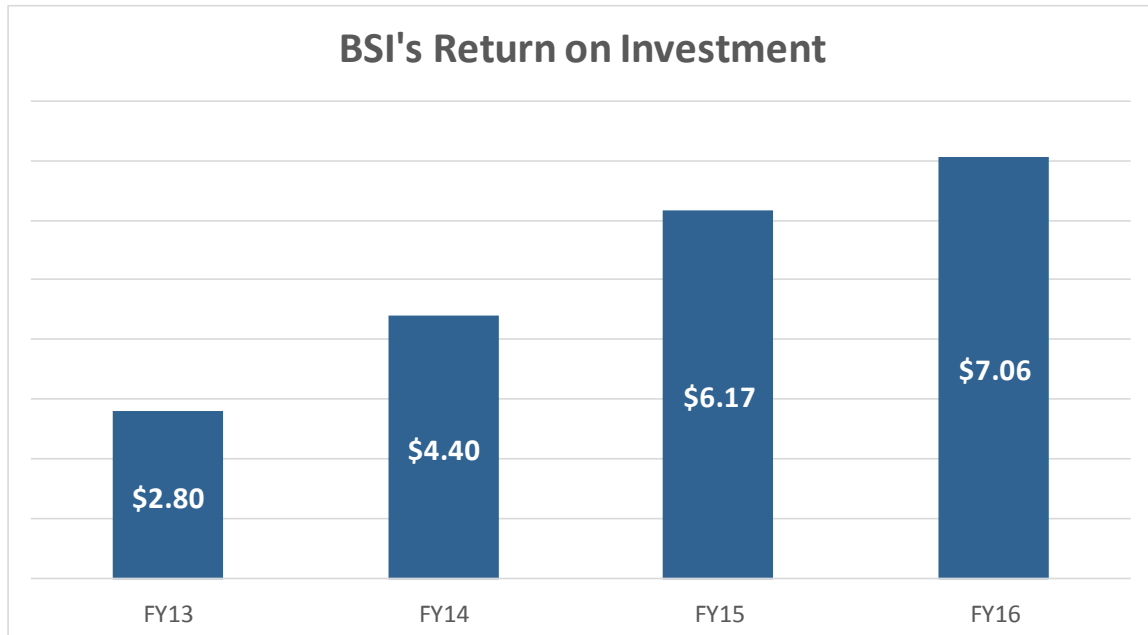
Following the defeat of ballot question 2 on election day, the Springfield Republican explores the next steps for charter schools and education reforms efforts in Massachusetts.

[Read more coverage of OSA's work](#)

Questions or concerns about this newsletter?

Email us at

media@sao.state.ma.us.



Accountability in Action: Preserving Benefits For Those Who Need Them

Through its Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI), the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) investigates instances of potential fraud in our public benefits programs: MassHealth, SNAP, and other programs designed to assist people struggling to make ends meet.

Since taking office, Auditor Bump has had an impressive track record identifying fraud in these programs, and this year was no different. In November, Auditor Bump [released a report](#) highlighting BSI's work in the previous fiscal year. During this time, her office identified \$15.4 million in fraud in these programs, the sixth straight year of record-setting findings and a 12 percent increase over the previous year.

While it would be easy to assume the increase in identified fraud is a result of more fraud in the system, it is actually a reflection of BSI becoming more adept and strategic at conducting investigations. Through investments in technology and training, the average amount of fraud identified in investigations with findings was \$14,783 for this year, approximately 21 percent higher than the previous year. This shows the impact these improvements have had on BSI's ability to focus its efforts on the entities that are the worst perpetrators of public benefits fraud.

From food assistance to medical care, public benefits play an important role in our state and the lives of its residents. By identifying fraud in these programs in a strategic manner, the OSA is ensuring that benefits are provided with accountability, and that taxpayers in the Bay State remain confident that dollars are making it to those for whom they are intended.



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