

# THE AUDITOR'S REPORT



## News & Updates

from the Office of the State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump

*Making Government Work Better*



Suzanne M. Bump  
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Dear Friend,

The motto of our office is, "*Making Government Work Better.*" Our audits are the critical tools to achieve this.

Our audits offer agencies and programs an important opportunity for independent and objective analysis. We don't seek to create conflict, but rather, to identify deficiencies or obstacles that prevent state government from operating effectively and efficiently. We don't just identify problems, we also offer ideas to resolve them—our recommendations can help auditees plan their steps to address the issues we find. Since 2011, agencies report that they have implemented or are in the process of implementing approximately 95 percent of our recommendations.

Last month, we released an audit of [the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination](#) (MCAD), which is responsible for enforcing the state's antidiscrimination laws in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, credit, and access to education. Our audit found the department had not completed investigations into claims of discrimination in the timeframe required by state regulations, investigators did not always complete the required monthly minimum number of cases, and other inefficiencies.

While the agency attributes many of their struggles to a lack of funding, our team provided recommendations to improve how they meet their mission that don't require new funding. Our recommendations included expanded use of electronic filing to reduce paperwork, and greater use of mediation to solve disputes more quickly.

MCAD has felt the positive impacts these recommendations have had on their work. Jamie Williamson, Chairwoman on MCAD, recently wrote me a letter where she stated, "Already, the work of your office is bearing fruit in the ongoing standardization of operations and development in new policies."

While our recommendations do not always garner the headlines our findings do, they are the core of our work and our best means for making government work better for residents of Massachusetts.

Thank you,

Suzanne M. Bump  
Auditor of the Commonwealth

## Recent Audits

[MassHealth's Adult Foster Care and Group Adult Foster Care Program](#)

[Venture Community Services Inc.](#)

[Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation](#)

[Massachusetts Maritime Academy](#)

[Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination](#)

[Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority](#)

[Massachusetts Thoroughbred Breeders Association Inc.](#)

[View more audits](#)

## Recent Press Releases

[Audit finds \\$15M in Inappropriate Payments from MassHealth](#)

[Audit Finds Discrimination Investigations Not Complete Within Required Time Frames](#)

[Bump's Office Accepts NSAA Excellence in Accountability Award](#)

[View more releases](#)

# OSA Focus: Charting a Course for Excellence

Last month brought about the close of the 2016 fiscal year, and here at the OSA, that means identifying new goals and priorities for the coming year. But, as they say, to know where you're going, first you have understand where you've been. This message is a central theme in the story of the Office of the State Auditor—its past, its present, and its future.

When Auditor Bump was elected State Auditor, she had a vision—to use all of the tools available to help the agency become a leader in government performance auditing. But, a vision without a plan is just a dream. So a plan was built based on accountability, professionalism, efficiency, and transparency.

For this vision to become reality, the organization developed strategic plans and called for an outside review —specifically, the first peer review done of the office in 15 years. The peer review process found that the office was not operating at appropriate standards, which ushered in a round of reforms and changes throughout the organization. In conjunction with the peer review, Auditor Bump [prioritized four areas](#) to focus efforts of improvement: accountability, professionalism, efficiency and effectiveness, and transparency. By concentrating on these areas and establishing specific deliverables, such as an updated audit manual, trainings on government audit standards, and professional development opportunities, the organization began to move toward its goal of excellence in auditing.

Since then, the OSA has made incredible progress. Three years after failing that first peer review, the OSA not only [passed its review in 2014](#), but earned the highest possible rating. And, just recently, this office has received national recognition for it's the [quality and impact](#) of one of our audits.

Investments in developing OSA's data analytics capacity have also helped the office reach milestones. In 2015, an audit of MassHealth's [Managed Care Organization program](#) produced the largest monetary finding in 27 years. And, our Bureau of Special Investigations has identified a record amount of public benefits fraud [each year for five years](#), not because there is more fraud, but because investigators are getting faster and smarter about identifying it.

But these significant achievements would not be possible without the commitment of [OSA staff](#) to the agency's mission to make government work better every day.

Becoming a leader in government auditing is not just about finding problems, it's about providing constructive recommendations so auditees have the opportunity to improve. The OSA strives to model the same accountability, transparency, and innovation expected of auditees. If everyone is aligned in their efforts to make government work better, all of state government can succeed. And, that helps restore the public's trust in government.

## How To Conduct An Audit As Told By GIFs



One of the key functions of the OSA is producing audits with the goal of promoting accountability, innovation, and transparency to improve public trust in government. While each audit is unique, and takes a distinct path toward completion. So, OSA staff [created a roadmap of the process](#) using GIFs to share the story of how an audit goes from being an idea to a tool to make government work better.

# OSA's Work Makes Headlines

## [Audit Finds Need for Improvement at MCAD](#)

Our audit of MCAD found investigations of complaints to the commission took longer than the timeframes established by the commission's own regulations, leading to backlogs and strained resources. The Boston Herald followed up on the audit, which was mentioned during Auditor Bump's appearance on Boston Herald radio.

## [Auditor's Office Receives National Award](#)

The OSA's journey toward achieving excellence in government auditing reaches a milestone, receiving the Excellence in Accountability Award from the National State Auditors Association. The Braintree Forum covered the national recognition.



*Auditor Bump (right) recently joined Boston Herald Radio hosts Jaclyn Cashman (left) and Hillary Chabot (center) in the studio to talk about MCAD, the MBTA, and more.*

## ["In Thirty" with Karen Ellery Jones](#)

Auditor Bump joined host Karen Ellery Jones on Sandwich Community TV to discuss how transparency and innovation help build public trust in government and what the OSA is doing to help government work better in Massachusetts.

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

# Accountability in Action: Helpful Tools for the Job

The start of a new fiscal year, which began on July 1, is a time when most agencies and departments look back over the year gone by and identify the achievements made and challenges faced, all in preparation for the new year ahead.

Dwindling tax revenues led the Legislature to cut more than \$260 million from the FY17 budget. And last week, the Governor signed the measure after cutting even more spending. As a result, many agencies and departments are feeling the pressure to do more with less. In this search for ways to increase effectiveness and efficiency, audits can be helpful management tools that not only improve operations, but help address systemic issues with sustainable change.

Sometimes, agencies have an inkling of their weak areas and seek an outsider's take on just how deep and widespread these weaknesses are. OSA findings, and recommendations to address those findings, can serve as a catalyst for improvement or a green light for the change at these agencies to help them fulfill their missions.

For example, the recent [MCAD](#) audit highlights the role audits play in increasing accountability and efficiency. The agency was grateful for OSA's assistance in helping to identify, and in some cases confirm, ways they could work more effectively. MCAD has already begun to implement some of our recommendations to eliminate burdensome processes that limited the agency's ability to operate efficiently.

While state government is a varied landscape, with each agency and program possessing their own nuances, the OSA's recommendations are all geared towards making government work better, and MCAD is just one of many instances where audit work has helped spur greater effectiveness.

For example, in 2013, the Department of Conservation and Recreation sought out the OSA to review its lease and permitting processes. The agency's administration had a hunch there were issues in that area of its operations. The resulting [audit confirmed this](#), and, since then, DCR has made changes and negotiated new rental agreements to bring in more revenue for the department.

Beyond reaping financial benefits for the Commonwealth, audit work has also brought about legislative changes and operational improvements throughout state government:

- Since the 2013 audit of the [Department of Early Education and Care](#), the agency has improved Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) checks for childcare workers.
- Following the 2014 audit of the [Board of Registration in Medicine \(BORIM\)](#), the agency now conducts criminal record checks of all initial applicants for full licensure and is developing an automated system to facilitate statutorily mandated reporting of physician criminal data.
- The [Department of Transitional Assistance](#) now consults the Social Security Administration's death master list when it is determining applicant eligibility for public assistance benefits.
- The [Department of Housing and Community Development](#) created a tracking system for vacant units at local housing authorities to improve the rate by which units can be filled.

These examples illustrate just how varied state government is, and also how equally diverse the impact of audit work has been in ongoing efforts to make government work better.



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