

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,

The true value of the work of the State Auditor's Office is demonstrated in its impact to improve the work of government through public policy debates and decisions. In recent months, our work has led to improvements in the realms of public safety, health, and housing.

Our 2014 audit of the Department of Public Safety found deficiencies in the way the state conducts [elevator inspections](#). These audit findings played an important role in a study released in August by the Elevator Study Commission, which was established by the Legislature to address the problem of elevator inspection backlogs. The Board of Elevator Regulations is considering the Commission's report as it updates rules to improve public safety.

When I became Auditor, I wanted to make sure state agencies and programs were working to ensure children grow up in a healthy and safe environment. The Department of Public Health recently cited our audit of the state's various programs aimed at addressing [childhood obesity](#) in Massachusetts in its report on the state's progress toward implementation of the Massachusetts Nutritional Standards.

The Division of Local Mandates' examination of the [municipal impacts](#) of the state's participation in the federal McKinney-Vento program and emergency hotel/motel shelter program was cited by news publications as an important part of the discussion surrounding the need for permanent housing for families.

We often note that, since 2011, 95 percent of our audit recommendations have been implemented. This is more than just a statistic. These changes represent real policy improvements and a government that works better for the people of Massachusetts.

Thank you,

Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth

Recent Audits

[Wareham Housing Authority](#)

[Schooner Ernestina Commission](#)

[Massachusetts Cultural Council](#)

[Determination of Whether Net State Tax Revenues Exceeded Allowable State Tax Revenues](#)

[Centro Las Americas, Inc.](#)

[Comprehensive Mental Health Systems, Inc.](#)

[Massachusetts Military Division: Massachusetts National Guard](#)

[State 911 Department](#)

[View more audits](#)

Recent Press Releases

[Auditor Bump Appoints Timothy Foley to Serve on Health Policy Commission](#)

[Audit Finds Significant Expenditure, Rent Assessment, Documentation Issues at Wareham Housing Authority](#)

[NASCIO Recognizes OSA's Data Analytics Tools](#)

[Audit Shows MassHealth Making Inappropriate Payments for Adult Foster Care Services to Worcester Provider](#)

[Audit Finds Slow State Reimbursements Strain Local 911 Call Centers](#)

[View more releases](#)

Since its creation,
the RBRE has  contributed to over
\$90 million in cost trend improvements
in Massachusetts state government.



@MassAuditor

At NASCIO's Annual Conference, OSA presented a video, featured above, that explains one of the agency's data analytics tools—the Rules Based Risk Engine, or RBRE. Watch the video [here](#).

OSA Focus: Leading the Way on Innovation

Last month, the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) recognized the Office of the State Auditor for its use of innovative data analytics tools to improve state government operations. The award specifically recognized the impact of the Rules Based Risk Engine, or RBRE, which was developed by an OSA employee.

In traditional auditing, the OSA collects significant amounts of data to identify areas of concern, and provides recommendations for addressing those problems. However, once the audit is complete, and auditee behavior and circumstances changes, the data collected becomes outdated.

The RBRE helps to solve this problem. This innovative tool connects to auditee databases, and allows the OSA to monitor data continuously, even before audit staff has formally begun their field work. This allows auditors to identify the areas at greatest risk of waste, fraud, and abuse, and focus their work in these realms. Once the audit is complete, the findings and recommendations are incorporated into the RBRE, making the tool even more powerful. With this new information, the OSA can track the impact of the audit on the agency's performance. Already, the RBRE has contributed to over \$90 million in cost trend improvements for Massachusetts state government and taxpayers.

The RBRE is just one example of how the OSA is a national leader in government audit innovation. More importantly though, this, along with our other data analytics tools, promote accountability to restore public trust in government.

OSA's Work Makes Headlines

[Despite cost benefits, cities and towns slow to regionalize 911 dispatch centers](#)

After our audit of the State 911 Department found that state efforts and funds to promote regionalization of 911 services have been relatively ineffective, the Springfield Republican looked at local stances on regionalization.

[State Audit: Some Centro expenses missed standards for reimbursement](#)

The Worcester Telegram & Gazette looks at our audit of Centro, a non-profit social service organization based in that community. The audit found that state funds were used inappropriately or lacked proper documentation.

[Auditor says state took too long to review emergency call center grants](#)

The Boston Globe highlights the findings of our audit of the State 911 Department, which found that slow state grant reimbursements often discourage local governments from applying for these grants.

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



Auditor Bump was the guest speaker at Representative Paul McMurtry's Community Forum at the Dedham Community Theater on September 29.

Questions or concerns about this newsletter?

Email us at
media@sao.state.ma.us.

Accountability in Action: OSA Ahead of the Curve

2016 has been a significant year for the Office of the State Auditor (OSA). The OSA has received several national awards for its [audit work](#), [data analytics tools](#), and contributions to [furthering government accountability](#). These awards are not only a significant honor, but also represent the transformation of the OSA into a national leader in building public trust in government. Today, the audits and reports released by the OSA are more impactful, and inform policy decisions across the Commonwealth.

But the work does not stop here. The OSA is committed to “Auditing 2.0” - that is, transforming the way government auditing is conducted so that auditors can review, analyze and cross-match huge data sets in order to get to the root causes of problems.

The quest for innovation continues, and the OSA has a number of initiatives planned to keep its position as a national leader, which include:

- Expanded use and improved capabilities of the Rules-Based Risk Engine (RBRE) data analytics tool;
- Development and agency-wide deployment of additional data analytics tools to further enhance audits and analyze contributing factors to statewide challenges, such as the opioid epidemic;
- Implementation of tools that will allow the OSA to not only see the impacts of problems it has identified, but also predict what will happen if the problems are not corrected; and
- A continued emphasis on improvement of state government data quality to bolster transparency and accountability.

The challenges facing state government are constantly evolving, so the OSA must continue to innovate to identify and address these problems. Through hard work and creativity, OSA is ahead of the curve, and with an eye toward the future, it will remain in that position.



Auditor Bump shared the OSA's story of developing and implementing data analytics and the impact of the tools on government auditing during the NASACT Annual Conference in Anaheim in August.



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