



Strengthening the Social Safety Net

Public benefits programs play an integral part in the strength of our state and its people. They provide pregnant women, the elderly and individuals with serious illnesses or disabilities with a life of dignity through access to food and medical care. They also provide pathways to self-sufficiency for individuals seeking to improve their lives. And, they provide peace of mind to the rest of us, knowing that this safety net is available if we or our families ever fall on hard times.

Identify Fraud in Public Benefits Programs

The Office of the State Auditor's (OSA) Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI) is charged with investigating allegations of public assistance fraud throughout the Commonwealth. The work of BSI ensures that taxpayer dollars used to fund Massachusetts' public benefits programs are used effectively so that benefits are available to residents who truly need them.

Expand Use of Data Analytics & Information Sharing with Partners to Focus on Areas Most Susceptible to Fraud

Through its strategic investments in data analytics technology and training, BSI is increasing its capacity to more effectively identify areas most susceptible to fraud. Analyzing data that shows the who, where, and how of benefits use, allows the office to focus its fraud investigation efforts on providers participating in large-scale fraud. This strategy cuts off sources of fraud and produces the potential for greater results for the state.

BSI partners with local, state, and federal agencies to exchange information, and identify and prosecute individuals who defraud and weaken the integrity of public benefits programs. Currently, it is the only state agency represented on the U.S. Attorney's Public Assistance Task Force.

Identify Barriers to Accessing Public Benefits

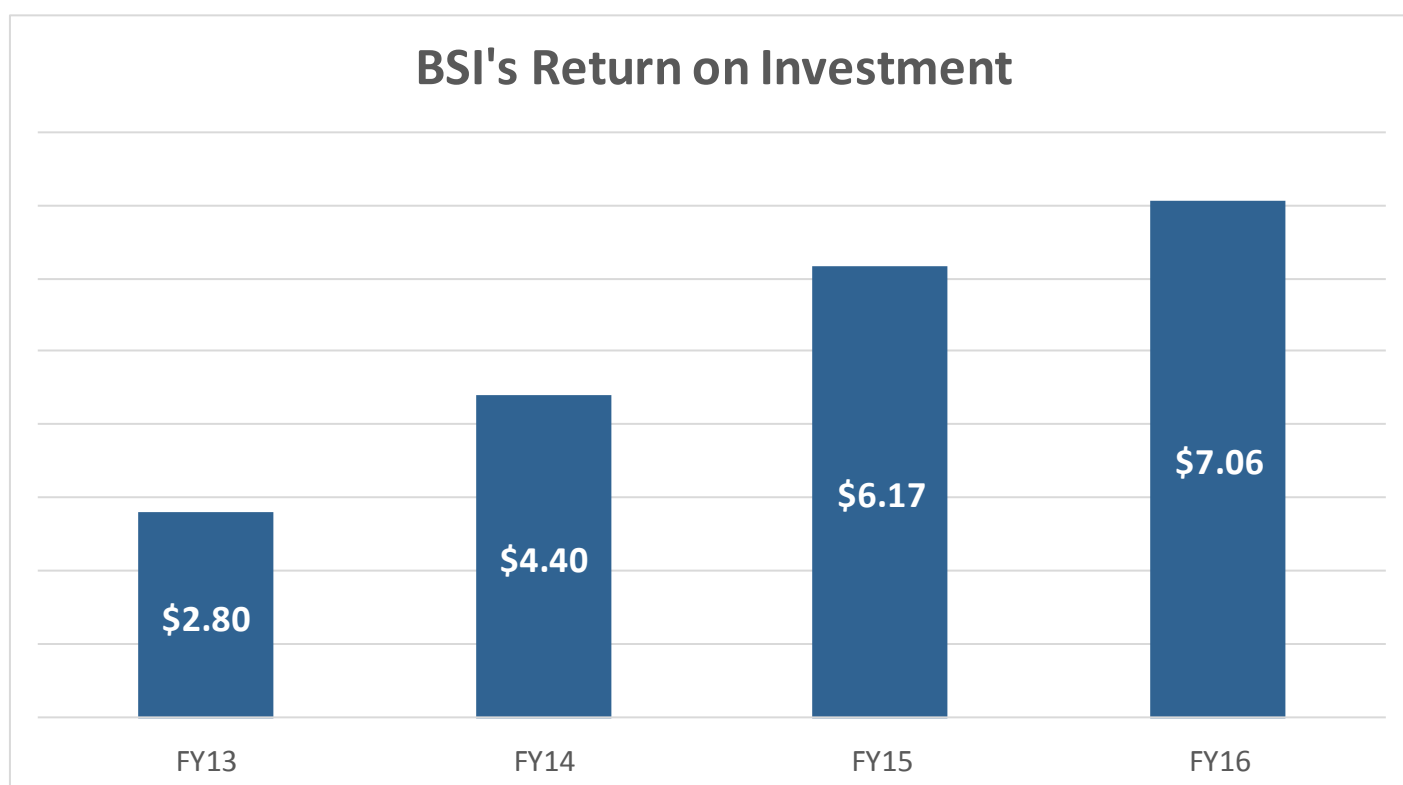
Just as fraud weakens public benefits programs, so too do barriers which hinder access to these programs. These barriers strain the time and resources of individuals seeking assistance, depress utilization of the programs, and reinforce the struggles these individuals face. In the coming year, OSA will conduct an analysis of the state's processes for accessing public benefits to identify barriers to access and provide recommendations to address them.

Bureau Of Special Investigations FY16 Annual Report

The Office of the State Auditor's Bureau of Special investigations (BSI) strives to ensure public benefits programs operate with integrity. It produces a statutorily required report every year, which summarizes its work.

A Record \$15.5 Million in Fraud Identified in FY16

In FY16, BSI identified a record \$15,448,890.19 in fraud, approximately a 12 percent increase over the previous year, and the sixth straight year of record fraud identification. This does not represent an increase in fraud, but in our capacity to identify it.



Additional Highlights of BSI Work in FY16

- ⇒ BSI had a return on investment of \$7.06 for every dollar invested in its work, a 14 percent increase over the previous year
- ⇒ For investigations with findings of fraud, the average finding was \$14,783, a 21 percent increase over the previous year
- ⇒ 63 percent of the fraud identified by BSI was in the MassHealth program, accounting for \$9.8 million