

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

Dear Friend,

We all know that voting is one of the most fundamental rights of a healthy democracy and Massachusetts has proven once again that democracy is alive and well. For the second time, Massachusetts voters had the opportunity to take advantage of the new early voting law, casting their ballots before Election Day. Running an election is no small task – and no small expenditure either. Our city and town clerks work hard to ensure a smooth process and, as a result of [an unfunded mandate determination my office issued in 2017](#), communities will be reimbursed for their required costs to provide this service. My office will soon send a survey to municipalities to determine their mandated spending related to early voting. We will then certify these costs for the Secretary of the Commonwealth, who will reimburse communities for their expenses. [You can learn more about this survey and costs that will be covered by the state here.](#)

The state has a legal obligation to provide funding to local communities when it requires them to offer a new service to residents. I am proud of the critical role my office has played in not only ensuring the state lives up to this commitment but also in making early voting more successful by ensuring local communities have the financial resources to provide this important service.



Thank you,

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Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth

Recent Audits/Reports

[Cape Ann Regional Transit Authority](#)

[University of Massachusetts—Amherst](#)

[Norfolk County District Attorney's Office](#)

[Plymouth County District Attorney's Office](#)

[Martha's Vineyard Regional Transit Authority](#)

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Following an [audit](#), the Executive Office of Elder Affairs reports that it has improved training for agency contractors tasked with reporting to District Attorneys, enhanced oversight of these contractors, and improved communication with DAs.

OSA Focus: Protecting the Vulnerable

One of the most fundamental jobs of government is to protect vulnerable residents who cannot protect themselves; however, recent audits by the Office of State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump found that state government sometimes falls short of this responsibility. These audits are driving change at those agencies.

In a recently released audit, [Bump found the Executive Office of Elder Affairs \(EOEA\) did not always report incidents of serious abuse or neglect of seniors to local law enforcement](#) as required by law. In a review of 190 allegations of abuse or neglect of seniors, Bump noted that 7 serious incidents—which included stage 4 bed sores, emotional abuse, and threats of physical violence—were not reported to district attorneys. In addition, 6 other serious incidents were noted as being referred to DAs, but the agency could not provide evidence to show they were actually referred. Without these referrals, there is a significant risk that these incidents will not be investigated by law enforcement, perpetrators will not be punished, and the abuse will be allowed to continue.

This wasn't the first time that Bump found state agencies failed to properly report abuse or neglect. Last year, in an audit of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), [she discovered 19 incidents of serious abuse or neglect](#) of children that were not reported to DAs for investigation.

In both of these audits, Bump called on the agencies to step up their oversight and reporting of incidents of abuse and neglect - and the agencies report they have taken action to address these deficiencies. EOEA reports that it has improved training for agency contractors tasked with reporting to DAs, enhanced oversight of these contractors, and improved communication with DAs. Similarly, [DCF indicated](#) that it has stepped-up oversight and compliance with this reporting requirement.

While some might seek to dismiss the failure to report these incidents as small lapses, this thinking ignores the fact that in each of these cases there is a person—a child or senior—that counts on the agencies charged with protecting them to live up to this responsibility. Acting on the recommendations of these audits, EOEA and DCF are now more equipped to accomplish their missions to protect our most vulnerable.

Recent Press Releases

[Audit Calls on Norfolk DA to Better Track Success of its Diversion Program](#)

[In Response to Audit, Plymouth District Attorney Taking Steps to Improve Diversion Program](#)

[Audit Leads to Improved Reporting of Instances of Elder Abuse](#)

[Audit Recommends Ways Bristol District Attorney's Office Can Better Measure Success of Juvenile Diversion Program](#)

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Data Analytics has changed the way we conduct audits, allowing us to dive deeper into information to identify complex problems and develop thoughtful solutions. Last month, Auditor Bump shared the OSA's insights into the power of data analytics at the National Center for Public Performance Conference at Suffolk University. [Learn more here.](#)

OSA's Work Makes Headlines

[Auditor Suzanne Bump: Elder affairs agency does not properly report abuse to prosecutors](#)

The *Springfield Republican* highlights an audit which has led to enhanced training for state contractors to ensure that serious incidents of elder abuse and neglect are reported to local district attorneys for investigation and potential prosecution.

[Plymouth District Attorney's office says it will better monitor diversion program](#)

Following an audit, the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office reports it will take steps to improve its tracking and analysis of data for its Diversion Program, the *Patriot Ledger* reports.

[What Massachusetts Can Do to Combat IoT Security Threats](#)

The growing number of internet -connected devices has the potential to make government work better, but a recent audit found the state must take a proactive approach to adopting these technologies. *StateTech* dives into the audit recommendations.

Accountability in Action: Data Driven Diversion

There is a growing consensus in state government on the need to reduce prison populations and seek innovative ways to rehabilitate nonviolent criminal offenders that do not subject them to years in the criminal justice system and a lifetime with a criminal record. Earlier this year, lawmakers passed a criminal justice reform bill that took meaningful steps towards this goal, but there are other actions that government entities can take toward it as well.

District attorneys play a critical role in shaping our criminal justice system, and recent audits of the [Worcester](#), [Hampden](#), [Bristol](#), [Plymouth](#), and [Norfolk](#) District Attorneys' Offices have provided actionable steps to improve and evaluate the effectiveness of their Diversion Programs. These programs offer young people who are charged with certain nonviolent crimes, including alcohol offenses, disturbing the peace, disorderly conduct, and shoplifting, with an opportunity to have the charges dismissed by completing program requirements, often including community service and educational courses.



The OSA has released a series of audits providing District Attorneys' Offices with actionable steps to improve and evaluate the effectiveness of their Diversion Programs.

The audits encouraged each of the offices to make better use of data related to the programs to assess whether they are reaching their objectives. Collection and analysis of data related to program completion, potential barriers, and long-term impacts can not only help the offices make changes that make the programs more effective but will also help them make the case to lawmakers that these programs are worthy of additional financial investment. The Plymouth District Attorney's Office has already reported that [it is taking action on the audit recommendations](#) and will begin to analyze program data.

Residents of the Commonwealth expect their government to be capable of self-reflection and correction. They want to know that it can proactively identify not only problems but also ways to make programs better. Collection and analysis of data—such as is recommended by these audits—is a critical component in accomplishing this.

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