Oversight Partners

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Office of the State Auditor

Website

Mission Statement

"The State Auditor’s Office (SAO) provides citizens with independent and transparent examinations of how state and local governments use public funds, and develops strategies to make government more efficient and effective" (official website).

Most Recent Reports

Available **here**.

Reports Recommended by Agency

- Civil Asset Forfeiture: Strengthening Transparency and Protections for Property Owners 04/11/2024
  - Summary: Civil Asset Forfeiture
  - Civil asset forfeiture is a legal tool that allows police agencies to seize and forfeit (retain) property believed to be involved in or the proceeds of a crime. While property owners may file a claim to recover it, a performance audit in Washington found police agencies retained up to 90 percent of such property. This totaled nearly $40 million in forfeitures from January 2020

through December 2022. This published report examined eight police agencies to better understand forfeitures in the state, and included recommendations to strengthen transparency and protections for property owners.

- Examining Lead Testing for Children Enrolled in Medicaid 12/12/2023
  - Summary: Lead Testing for Children Enrolled in Medicaid
  - “Medicaid, called Apple Health in Washington, requires enrolled children up to age six be tested for lead exposure, which remains a widespread public health concern. This performance audit found only 26 percent of the more than 240,000 eligible children had blood lead tests that met federal requirements.”

- Controls To Manage Outdated Computer Applications 9/5/2023
  - Summary: Controls to Manage Outdated Computer Applications
  - “Between 40 percent and 60 percent of Washington’s state government computer IT applications could be considered “legacy,” meaning they are beyond their normal lifespan and may soon be obsolete. This audit looked at three state agencies to see if they have procedures to identify legacy applications and address risks associated with them.”

- Reviewing Investigations of Police Use of Deadly Force: David J. Pruitte Case, 9/28/2022
  - Summary: State Auditor’s Office releases first audits of police use of deadly force investigations
  - "Our Office began publishing first-of-their-kind audits related to investigations of law enforcement officers’ use of deadly force in late 2022. The reports compare these investigations to state rules and professional best practices, representing a new level of transparency in law enforcement that benefits everyone in our state."

- Assessing the Workplace Culture at the Department of Fish and Wildlife, 9/13/2021
  - Summary: Assessing the Workplace Culture at the Department of Fish and Wildlife
  - "This in-depth review of a large state agency’s workplace culture was a first-of-its-kind performance audit in the state of Washington."

- Washington's Unemployment Benefit Programs in 2020: Understanding improper payments and service delays during the COVID-19 pandemic, 4/13/2021

    - Follow-up Audit: Evaluating Customer Service at Washington's Department of Employment Security, 12/19/2022
    - Summary: Washington's Unemployment Benefit Programs in 2020
    - "This audit examined the scope of, and reasons behind, substantial fraud and customer service delays in the state’s unemployment benefits program during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our work (including a follow-up audit) led to legislation requiring the public reporting of key customer service metrics, as well as other mandates to address problems we reported."

- Sexual Assault Kits: Assessing Washington State Patrol's testing backlog and tracking system, 11/1/2022
    - Summary: WSP Sexual Assault Kits Testing and Tracking
    - "Our audit examined Washington state’s backlog of untested sexual assault kits, a long-standing concern and top priority for survivors, their families and advocates, law enforcement agencies and lawmakers."

- State of Washington, Financial Statements and Federal Single Audit Report for the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021; 8/8/2022
    - Summary: $37 billion and counting: Find out how Washington spent COVID-19 relief money and other federal funding in 2021
    - "Compared to its 1,083-page paper counterpart, our infographic version of this annual report generated a lot more interest from the general public, allowing us to communicate important highlights of our state’s financial picture to a much wider audience."

- FIT Data Stories: COVID-19’s effect on revenues in border towns and special districts
    - "A unique tool in the name of transparency, our Financial Intelligence Tool (FIT) aggregates local governments’ financials into one convenient customizable tool, allowing users to delve into and understand this data in unique ways."

Note

Washington does not have an Office of the Inspector General.