



Office of the Washington State Auditor

Pat McCarthy

Entrance Conference: Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and Central Puget Sound Economic Development District (CPSEDD)

The Office of the Washington State Auditor's vision is increased trust in government. Our mission is to provide citizens with independent and transparent examinations of how state and local governments use public funds, and develop strategies that make government more efficient and effective.

The purpose of this meeting is to share our planned audit scope so that we are focused on the areas of highest risk. We value and appreciate your input.

Audit Scope

Based on our planning, we will perform the following audits:

Accountability audit for July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 (PSRC only)

We will examine the management, use and safeguarding of public resources to ensure there is protection from misuse and misappropriation. In addition, we will evaluate whether there is reasonable assurance for adherence to applicable state laws, regulations and policies and procedures.

We plan to evaluate the following areas:

- Open public meetings – compliance with minutes, meetings and executive session requirements
- Financial condition – reviewing for indications of financial distress
- Summer Planning Academy (SPA) Program
- Accounts payable – travel expenditures
- Payroll – gross wages

Financial statement audit for July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 (PSRC and CPSEDD)

We will provide an opinion on whether your financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with the applicable reporting framework. The audit does not attempt to confirm the accuracy of every amount, but does search for errors large enough to affect the conclusions and decisions of a financial statement user.

Federal grant compliance audit for July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 (PSRC only)

This audit is required by federal law when a local government spends \$750,000 or more annually in federal financial assistance. We will provide an opinion on compliance with federal requirements that could have a direct and material effect on your major federal programs.

We plan to test the following federal program:

- Highway Planning and Construction, ALN 20.205

This report must be submitted, along with the Data Collection Form, to the federal clearinghouse within 30 days after receipt of the report or nine months after the end of the audit period, whichever is earlier.

Engagement Letter

We have provided an engagement letter that confirms both management and auditor responsibilities, and other engagement terms and limitations. Additionally the letter identifies the cost of the audit, estimated timeline for completion and expected communications.

Levels of Reporting

Findings

Findings formally address issues in an audit report. Findings report significant results of the audit, such as significant deficiencies and material weaknesses in internal controls; misappropriation; and material abuse or non-compliance with laws, regulations or policies. You will be given the opportunity to respond to a finding and this response will be published in the audit report.

Management Letters

Management letters communicate control deficiencies, non-compliance, misappropriation, or abuse that are less significant than a finding, but still important enough to be formally communicated to the governing body. Management letters are referenced, but not included, in the audit report.

Exit Items

Exit items address control deficiencies, non-compliance with laws or regulations, or errors that have an insignificant effect on the audit objectives. These issues are informally communicated to management.

Important Information

Confidential Information

Our Office is committed to protecting your confidential or sensitive information. Please notify us when you give us any documents, records, files, or data containing information that is covered by confidentiality or privacy laws.

Audit Costs

The cost of the audit is estimated to be approximately \$46,000 for PSRC and \$11,200 for CPSEDD.

Expected Communications

During the course of the audit, we will communicate with Lili Mayer, Finance Manager on the audit status, any significant changes in our planned audit scope or schedule and preliminary results or recommendations as they are developed.

Please let us know if, during the audit, any events or concerns come to your attention of which we should be aware. We will expect Lili to keep us informed of any such matters.

Audit Dispute Process

Please contact the Audit Manager or Assistant Director to discuss any unresolved disagreements or concerns you have during the performance of our audit. At the conclusion of the audit, we will summarize the results at the exit conference. We will also discuss any significant difficulties or disagreements encountered during the audit and their resolution.

Loss Reporting

Washington state law requires all state agencies and local governments to immediately notify SAO if staff know or suspect loss of public resources, or of other illegal activity including a cyber-attack if it resulted in a loss of public resources or potentially impacted financial records or systems. State and local government employees should alert us to suspected fraud through the online Report a Suspected Fraud or Loss form below. These notifications can be made on our website at www.sao.wa.gov/report-a-concern/how-to-report-a-concern/fraud-program/.

Cybersecurity Loss Reporting

State and Local governments may also be required to report cybersecurity issues to the Washington State Attorney General's Office (AGO) or to the State Auditor's Office, including security breaches and cyber fraud. To learn more about when to report cybersecurity issues, please visit our website at <https://sao.wa.gov/has-your-government-experienced-a-cybersecurity-issue-here-is-when-and-how-to-report/>.

Peer Reviews of the Washington State Auditor's Office

To ensure that our audits satisfy *Government Auditing Standards*, our Office receives external peer reviews every three years by the National State Auditors Association (NSAA). The most recent peer review results are available online at www.sao.wa.gov/about-sao/who-audits-the-auditor/. Our Office received a "pass" rating, which is the highest level of assurance that an external review team can give on a system of audit quality control.

Emerging Issues

Some of the emerging issues affecting local governments are the following:

- [Local governments can receive a free cyber checkup from the State Auditor's Office](#)
- [SAO's new fraud-prevention resource for elected officials and members of appointed boards](#)
- [Audit Connection \(September 2023\)](#) includes articles designed to keep you up to date. Topics include:
 - How to review bank statements
 - Avoid local government losses by spotting – and stopping – common cyber-fraud techniques
 - BARS Manual changes – including subscription-based information technology arrangements and public-private and public-public partnerships
 - New OPMA material to help local governments navigate recent changes
 - SAO's improved annual filing system

Working Together to Improve Government

Audit Survey

When your report is released, you will receive an audit survey from us. We value your opinions on our audit services and hope you provide us feedback.

Local Government Support Team

This team provides support services to local governments through the Budget, Accounting, and Reporting System (BARS) and annual online filing technical assistance, provides accounting, reporting and BARS training. Our website and client portal offers many resources, including a client Help Desk that answers auditing and accounting questions, updated BARS manuals, access to resources and recorded trainings, and additional accounting and reporting resources. Additionally this team assists with the online filing of your financial statements.

The Center for Government Innovation

The Center for Government Innovation of the Office of the Washington State Auditor offers services designed to help you, help the residents you serve at no additional cost to your government. What does this mean? They provide expert advice in areas like building a Lean culture to help local governments find ways to be more efficient, effective and transparent. The Center also provides financial management technical advice and best practices and resources. These can be accessed from the “Improving Government” tab of our SAO website and help you act on accounting standard changes, comply with regulations, protect public resources, minimize your cybersecurity risk and respond to recommendations in your audit. The Center also offers the Financial Intelligence Tool, better known as FIT, to help you assess and monitor your finances and compare your financial operations to other local governments like you. You can email the Center for a personal training session to learn all the benefits using the FIT tool can provide. The Center understands that time is your most precious commodity as a public servant, and wants to help you do more with the limited hours you have. If you are interested in learning how the Center can help you maximize your effect in government, call them at (564) 999-0818 or email them at Center@sao.wa.gov.

Audit Team Qualifications

Kelly Collins, CPA, CFE, Director of Local Audit – Kelly has been with the Washington State Auditor’s Office since 1992. In her role, she oversees the audit teams that perform the audits for over 2,200 local governments. She serves on the Washington Finance Officers Association Board and is a member of the Washington Society of Certified Public Accountants’ Government Auditing and Accounting Committee. Phone: (564) 999-0807 or Kelly.Collins@sao.wa.gov

Wendy Choy, Assistant Director of Local Audit - Wendy has been with the Washington State Auditor’s Office since 2002. In her role as Assistant Director, she assists with statewide oversight and management of all the audits for local government. She is also the program manager for public hospital districts. She served as an Audit Manager for six years prior to becoming an Assistant Director of Local Audit. Phone: (425) 502-7067 or Wendy.Choy@sao.wa.gov

Joe Simmons, CPA, Program Manager – Joe has been with the State Auditor’s Office since 1987 and became Audit Manager of Team Central King County in November of 2015. In his prior role as Assistant Audit Manager on two different teams he worked on audits of state and local governments throughout Pierce, Kitsap, Mason, Clallam, and Jefferson counties. He has also provided support as one of our Office’s county and city subject matter specialists and is currently the CPA audit Program Manager. Phone: (206) 613-7628 SimmonsJ@sao.wa.gov

Madeleine “Maddie” Frost-Shaffer, Assistant Audit Manager – Maddie started at the Washington State Auditor’s Office in 2013 and became an Assistant Audit Manager in December 2017. In her current role, she supervises financial, single and accountability audit work at local governments in the Seattle area. She specialized in Accounting and Information System options while receiving her Bachelors of Arts in Business Administration from the University of Washington. Phone: 206-613-7627 or Madeleine.Frost-Shaffer@sao.wa.gov

Kathy Fleming, Audit Lead – Kathy has been with the Washington State Auditor’s Office since 2018. In her role as an Assistant State Auditor, she has worked on financial statement, federal grant compliance, and

accountability audits for the City of Seattle, King County, Seattle Housing Authority, Seattle Park District, White Pass School District, Washington State Public Stadium Authority and Puget Sound Regional Council. Phone: (206) 613-7637 or Kathy.Fleming@sao.wa.gov

Omaira Garcia, Assistant State Auditor – Omaira started at SAO at the beginning of 2023 having graduated from University of Washington Tacoma with a degree in Finance. Her previous experience includes work as a Tax assistant doing data entry. In her role as an Assistant State Auditor, she has audited the City of Seattle, Seattle Park District, Seattle Housing Authority and King County. | Phone: 206-613-7608 | Email: omaira.garcia@sao.wa.gov