



Office of the Washington State Auditor

Pat McCarthy

Entrance Conference: City of Tacoma

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:

Financial statement audit for January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025

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.

Annual Comprehensive Financial Report letter for the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program. We perform additional review procedures and provide our financial statement opinion in letter form for inclusion in your submission for this award program.

Federal grant compliance audit for January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025

This audit is required by federal law when a local government spends \$1,000,000 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 programs:

- Community Development Block Grants/Entitlement Grants Cluster, ALN 14.218
- Home Investment Partnerships Program, ALN 14.239
- Economic Development Initiative, Community Project Funding, and Miscellaneous grants, ALN 14.251
- Highway Planning and Construction, ALN 20.205
- Port Security Grant Program, ALN 97.056

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.

Work of Other Auditors

A financial statement audit of Tacoma Public Utilities funds was performed by Baker Tilly.

In accordance with professional standards, we considered the audit report and audit work performed by the other auditors in the planning of our audits. This includes communicating with the other auditors, evaluating the quality and results of the other auditor's work, and identifying areas that could affect our audits, including those in which we could leverage the work already performed.

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 (including financial statements, annual comprehensive financial reporting, federal single, CPA review of TPU, and accountability) is estimated to be approximately \$545,000.

Expected Communications

During the course of the audit, we will communicate with Polly Wainaina, Senior Financial 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 Polly 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.

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.

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.

Stay informed on current and upcoming accounting implementations at https://sao.wa.gov/sites/default/files/bars-files/GASB_Accounting_Changes.pdf

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. Learn more about how the Center can help you maximize your effect in government at <https://sao.wa.gov/improving-government/center-government-innovation>.

Explore the latest resources in our Resource Library at <https://sao.wa.gov/improving-government/resource-library>.

Audit Team Qualifications

Tina M. Watkins, CPA, Director of Local Audit – Tina has been with the Washington State Auditor’s Office since 1994. 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. She served as Assistant Director of Local Audit for 8 years prior to becoming the Director of Local Audit. Phone: (360) 260-6411 or Tina.Watkins@sao.wa.gov

Wendy Choy, CFE, 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, fire districts and miscellaneous special purpose 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

Saundra Groshong, Audit Manager – Saundra has been with the Washington State Auditor’s Office since 2000. In her role, she oversees Team Tacoma, which performs financial, single, and accountability audits for local governments in Pierce County. She has also worked on three teams covering various state and local audits throughout King, Pierce, and Thurston Counties. Phone: (253) 523-3037 or Saundra.Groshong@sao.wa.gov

Judy Ly Assistant Audit Manager – Judy worked at the Washington State Auditor’s Office from 2007-2014. She returned to the office in 2023. She has worked on financial, single and accountability audits of various entities including state agencies, cities and towns, counties, fire districts, park and recreational districts and school districts. Phone: (253) 354-5705 or Judy.Ly@sao.wa.gov.

Jason Starr, CPA, Audit Lead – Jason has been with the Washington State Auditor's Office since March 2021 and holds a Master of Science in Accounting from UW-Tacoma. Jason has participated in a variety of audits, including cities, counties, school districts, health departments, and other local area governments. Phone: (253) 523-3032 or Jason.Starr@sao.wa.gov