

Table of Contents

State Auditor

<i>Agency Profile</i>	1
Agency Expenditure Overview	3
Agency Financing by Fund	4
Agency Change Summary	5
<u>Program</u>	6
State Auditor	6
<u>Activity</u>	6
Audit Practice	6
<i>Activity Narrative</i>	6
Activity Expenditure Overview	9
Activity Financing by Fund	10
Legal/Special Investigations	11
<i>Activity Narrative</i>	11
Activity Expenditure Overview	13
Activity Financing by Fund	14
Government Information	15
<i>Activity Narrative</i>	15
Activity Expenditure Overview	17
Activity Financing by Fund	18
Pension	19
<i>Activity Narrative</i>	19
Activity Expenditure Overview	21
Activity Financing by Fund	22
Operations	23
<i>Activity Narrative</i>	23
Activity Expenditure Overview	25
Activity Financing by Fund	26
Constitutional	27
<i>Activity Narrative</i>	27
Activity Expenditure Overview	29
Activity Financing by Fund	30
Tax Increment Financing	31
<i>Activity Narrative</i>	31
Activity Expenditure Overview	33
Activity Financing by Fund	34
<u>Additional Documents</u>	35
<i>Change Item Request - Operating Adjustment</i>	35
<i>Change Item Request - Trainers</i>	37
<i>Change Item Request - Data Warehouse</i>	40
<i>Change Item Request - IT Auditors</i>	43

<https://www.osa.state.mn.us/>

AT A GLANCE

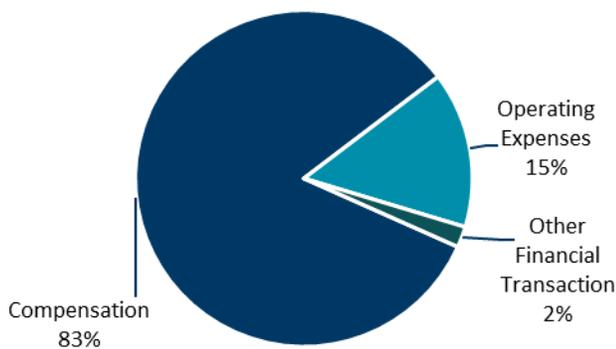
- Oversees the finances of approximately 3,300 local units of government.
- Issue local government financial and compliance audit reports annually as well as the State’s single audit for Minnesota Management and Budget and various agreed-upon procedures reports.
- Investigates allegations of unlawful use of public funds and property.
- Conducts continual outreach and provides educational resources to state and local elected officials, local government finance professionals, and the public.
- Reviews investment and financial reporting and compliance of approximately 520 local public pension plans.
- Reviews expenditures and compliance of approximately 1,670 tax increment financing (TIF) districts.
- Maintains financial reporting database on local government entities.
- Supports service by the State Auditor on six state boards and Executive Council.
- Publishes educational resources and provides ongoing training opportunities on local government finance and legal compliance issues.

PURPOSE

The mission of the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) is to oversee local government finances for Minnesota taxpayers by helping to ensure financial integrity and accountability in local governmental financial activities.

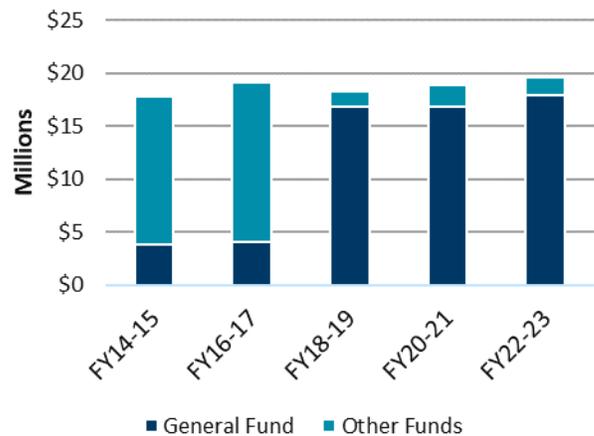
BUDGET

**Spending by Category
FY 2023 Actual**



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)

Historical Spending



FY 14 – 17 the Audit Practice Division funds were moved to the State Auditor’s Enterprise Fund

Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)

The OSA is organized into seven divisions: Audit Practice, Government Information (GID), Legal/Special Investigations (SI), Operations (OPM), Pension, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and Constitution. There are approximately 80 employees in six offices. We are primarily funded by a general fund appropriation, with the TIF Division being funded by a statutory appropriation. Since FY 2018, audit fees collected by the Audit Practice Division for auditing services are deposited in the general fund as non-dedicated receipts.

STRATEGIES

The OSA oversees over \$40 billion in annual local government finances by auditing local government financial statements and reviewing documents, data, reports, and reported complaints. The financial information collected from local governments is analyzed and serves as the basis of the statutory reports we issue.

Primary statutory citations regarding the State Auditor's office are in Chapter 6 of Minnesota Statutes (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/6>).

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>						
1000 - General	8,682	9,197	9,808	19,411	14,268	14,278
2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue	823	898	934	1,027	1,082	1,126
Total	9,505	10,094	10,743	20,438	15,350	15,404
Biennial Change				11,582		(427)
Biennial % Change				59		(1)

Expenditures by Program

State Auditor	9,505	10,094	10,743	20,438	15,350	15,404
Total	9,505	10,094	10,743	20,438	15,350	15,404

Expenditures by Category

Compensation	8,498	8,388	9,446	13,268	13,615	13,717
Operating Expenses	974	1,509	1,292	3,661	1,322	1,278
Capital Outlay-Real Property				1,752	135	135
Other Financial Transaction	33	197	5	1,757	278	274
Total	9,505	10,094	10,743	20,438	15,350	15,404

Full-Time Equivalent

	75.53	75.85	77.99	111.92	102.17	97.44
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(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
1000 - General						
Balance Forward In		3,339		5,157		
Direct Appropriation	12,021	12,083	14,965	14,254	14,268	14,278
Transfers In	20	250	150	3	205	281
Transfers Out	20	250	150	3	205	281
Cancellations	0	6,226				
Balance Forward Out	3,339		5,157			
Expenditures	8,682	9,197	9,808	19,411	14,268	14,278
Biennial Change in Expenditures				11,341		(673)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				63		(2)
Full-Time Equivalents	69.04	68.94	71.43	105.16	95.41	90.66

2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue

Balance Forward In	3,250	3,269	3,205	3,553	3,454	3,130
Receipts	40	68	63	58	58	58
Transfers In	803	765	1,220	870	700	700
Balance Forward Out	3,269	3,205	3,553	3,454	3,130	2,762
Expenditures	823	898	934	1,027	1,082	1,126
Biennial Change in Expenditures				241		247
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				14		13
Full-Time Equivalents	6.49	6.91	6.56	6.76	6.76	6.78

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	Biennium 2026-27
Direct				
Fund: 1000 - General				
FY2025 Appropriations	14,254	14,254	14,254	28,508
Base Adjustments				
Current Law Base Change		14	24	38
Forecast Base	14,254	14,268	14,278	28,546
Dedicated				
Fund: 2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue				
Planned Spending	1,027	1,082	1,126	2,208
Forecast Base	1,027	1,082	1,126	2,208
Revenue Change Summary				
Dedicated				
Fund: 2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue				
Forecast Revenues	58	58	58	116
Non-Dedicated				
Fund: 1000 - General				
Forecast Revenues	7,500	7,500	7,500	15,000

Program: State Auditor**Activity: Audit Practice**<https://www.osa.state.mn.us/>**AT A GLANCE**

- Serves the State and its citizens by performing financial and compliance audits of local governments with the highest level of independence and transparency of how public funds are used.
- Supports accountability of local government finances with unbiased and objective oversight.
- Promotes quality standards in local government audits.
- Performs the State's single audit for Minnesota Management and Budget.
- Shares education and technical assistance with local governments, state officials, and other auditors.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

We have the legal authority to audit local government finances, including those of counties, cities, and other political subdivisions of the state. We also have the authority to audit local governments that have been audited by other auditors if we determine that it is in the public's best interest. This unique authority gives taxpayers and other stakeholders confidence in the integrity of local government finances. To meet our responsibilities and professional standards, we provide audit staff with the necessary training to achieve excellence and proficiency in their field.

Through an agreement with Minnesota Management and Budget, we audit the State of Minnesota's major federally assisted programs. Under this agreement, we issue audit and compliance reports on the State's federally assisted programs to meet federal single audit requirements.

We are committed to helping local government work at its best and to maintain public trust. To this end, we strive to expand our outreach. We have done this by establishing a working group consisting of representatives from the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) Audit Practice Division, counties, and CPA firms that audit counties to work together toward consistent treatment in applying accounting principles and other regulations. We also participate with national, federal, state, and local officials to address accounting, auditing, and accountability issues as they arise.

In addition to OSA-sponsored training to local government employees, we partner with statewide and regional groups to provide training.

We are funded by an appropriation from the general fund. Audit fees collected for auditing services are deposited in the general fund as non-dedicated receipts.

SERVICES PROVIDED

We work to maintain accountability in local government finances by providing the following services:

- Issue financial audit reports of local governments, other governmental entities, and related organizations that provide transparency and accountability to taxpayers, the State of Minnesota, federal agencies, and other stakeholders;
- Ensure professional, unbiased, objective assessments of whether public resources are being managed, reported, and administered in accordance with applicable financial standards and in compliance with relevant laws and grant requirements;

- Report on the fair presentation of local governments’ financial statements, comment on irregularities and deficiencies in local governments’ internal controls and compliance with relevant laws, and recommend changes for improvements in local government accounting practices and procedures;
- Report on the State of Minnesota federal program internal control and compliance and recommend changes for federal grant administration improvement;
- Perform agreed-upon procedures engagements and report on the results;
- Share knowledge and experience with audit clients to make the audit process as efficient and effective as possible;
- Provide annual continuing professional education training for Audit Practice Division staff to maintain proficiency and meet required industry standards, and provide training for local government accounting professionals on new accounting principles and compliance issues;
- Conduct periodic desk reviews of county audit reports and work paper reviews of county audits performed by private CPA firms to determine that the quality standards for reporting and performing audit procedures in conformance with auditing standards are met;
- Convene and lead the local working group to promote consistency in county accounting and auditing;
- Collaborate with representatives from all levels of government in addressing emerging issues;
- Coordinate technical accounting and auditing research and guidance with other Office of the State Auditor divisions, further promoting efficiency and effectiveness.

RESULTS

<i>Type of Measure</i>	<i>Name of Measure</i>	<i>Previous</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Quality	Peer Review Quality Standards Met (See note 1)	Yes	Yes	2018/2021
Quantity	Total Number of Audit Hours	59,168	55,280	2022/2023
Quantity	Number of State and Local Audit Clients Served	75	66	2022/2023
Quantity	Number of Audits Requiring Submission to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse	48	44	2022/2023
Quantity	Number of federal programs/clusters audited	117	98	2022/2023
Quantity	Number of State and Local Government Accounting Professionals to Attend OSA Annual Training (available to public)	130	139	2022/2023

Notes:

We participate in the National State Auditor’s Association Peer Review Program. Maintenance of an appropriate internal quality control system is essential to performing effective audits that comply with professional standards. The results of the two previous Peer Reviews concluded that we met professional requirements. The Peer Review is performed every three years with the last ones being performed in 2018 and 2021.

The following provisions of Minnesota law are the primary legal authority for these activities:

Minn. Const., art. 5, §§ 1 and 4 (Executive branch).
Minn. Stat., ch. 6 (State Auditor).
Minn. Stat. § 6.46 (Powers to State Auditor).
Minn. Stat. § 6.47 (Prescribes Accounting and Budgeting Systems).
Minn. Stat. § 6.481 (Audits of Counties).
Minn. Stat. § 6.49 (Audits of Cities of the First Class).
Minn. Stat. § 6.495 (Audits of Relief Associations).
Minn. Stat. § 6.50 (Audits of Cities of the Second, Third, or Fourth Class).
Minn. Stat. § 6.51 (Audits of Other Political Subdivisions).
Minn. Stat. § 6.515 (Audits of Federal Money).
Minn. Stat. § 6.54 (Petition Audits).
Minn. Stat. § 6.55 (Request Audits).
Minn. Stat. § 123B.77 (Standards for School District Audits).
Minn. Stat. § 124E.16 (Audits of Charter Schools).
Minn. Stat. § 367.36 (Audits of Towns).
Minn. Stat. § 375.17 (Prescribes Form of County's Financial Statements).
Minn. Stat. §§ 412.02, 412.591 (Prescribes Audit Standards for Certain Cities).
Minn. Stat. § 465.719 (Audits for Corporations created by political subdivisions).
Minn. Stat. § 469.43 (Audit of nonprofit agency contracting with Destination Medical Center).
Minn. Stat. § 469.100 (Compliance Examinations of Economic Development Authorities).
Minn. Stat. § 471.697 (City and Town Audits/Financial Reports, Audits of 1st Class Cities).
Minn. Stat. § 471.698 (Prescribes Form of Certain City Financial Statements).
Minn. Stat. § 471.6985 (Prescribes Form of Municipal Liquor Store Financial Statements).
Minn. Stat. § 471.699 (Enforcement of Reporting Requirements).
Minn. Stat. § 473.13 (Audits of Met Council).
Minn. Stat. § 477A.017 (Prescribes Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Systems).
Minn. Stat. § 477A.0175 (Determine fees collected by unauthorized diversion program).

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>						
1000 - General	6,255	6,556	6,656	12,919	9,810	9,744
2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue	23	47	41	51	56	57
Total	6,279	6,603	6,698	12,970	9,866	9,801
Biennial Change				6,786		(1)
Biennial % Change				53		0
<u>Expenditures by Category</u>						
Compensation	5,710	5,462	6,064	9,316	8,969	8,896
Operating Expenses	567	987	632	1,295	747	755
Capital Outlay-Real Property				1,180	75	75
Other Financial Transaction	2	154	2	1,179	75	75
Total	6,279	6,603	6,698	12,970	9,866	9,801
<u>Full-Time Equivalents</u>	49.37	48.57	48.23	75.47	65.72	60.97

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
1000 - General						
Balance Forward In		2,884		2,921		
Direct Appropriation	9,159	9,268	9,727	10,001	10,015	10,025
Transfers Out	20	250	150	3	205	281
Cancellations		5,345				
Balance Forward Out	2,884		2,921			
Expenditures	6,255	6,556	6,656	12,919	9,810	9,744
Biennial Change in Expenditures				6,764		(21)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				53		(0)
Full-Time Equivalents	49.35	48.46	48.16	75.40	65.65	60.90

2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue

Balance Forward In	0	7	17	31	35	34
Receipts	30	57	55	55	55	55
Balance Forward Out	7	17	31	35	34	32
Expenditures	23	47	41	51	56	57
Biennial Change in Expenditures				22		21
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				31		23
Full-Time Equivalents	0.02	0.11	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07

Program: State Auditor**Activity: Legal/Special Investigations**

<https://www.osa.state.mn.us/>

AT A GLANCE

- Provides legal expertise to all divisions within the office.
- Responds to numerous questions and inquiries from the public, local government officials and employees, policymakers, and auditors on issues related to legal compliance that are within the Office of the State Auditor's (OSA) purview.
- Investigates allegations of unlawful use of public funds and property, working with law enforcement when requested.
- Annually publishes the Minnesota Legal Compliance Audit Guides by entity type.
- Publishes and updates Statements of Position to provide guidance on legal compliance, finance, and internal controls for local government officials and employees, and other interested parties.
- Provides training to assist local government officials and employees in protecting public assets.
- General Counsel serves as State Auditor's designee on the following boards: State Board of Investment, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and Public Employee Retirement Association.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

We work to help Minnesota's approximately 3,300 local units of government, 600 local pension plans, and 400 development authorities that receive and use public funds, do so in compliance with state law. Our work is relied upon by local governments, members of the public, auditors, law enforcement, statewide local government associations, and attorneys. We receive and respond to statutorily required reports of theft, embezzlement, and unlawful uses of public funds or property involving local governments. When requested by law enforcement, we work with them on financial investigations. We use specialized financial investigative and legal expertise to respond to questions and concerns. We meet our statutory duty to publish a legal compliance audit guide for use in auditing local governments. In addition, we support all divisions within the office by providing legal expertise and by conducting legal reviews of all audits performed by the Audit Practice Division. We are funded by an appropriation from the general fund.

SERVICES PROVIDED

We work to improve legal compliance in the use of local government funds by providing the following services:

- Perform reviews and investigations of local government financial issues, as appropriate, based on concerns that we receive; provide corrective recommendations to local governments;
- Review statutorily required reports of possible misuse of public funds to ensure that appropriate investigations have been performed, appropriate referrals to law enforcement have been made, and internal control modifications have been implemented as warranted;
- Provide targeted training on legal compliance and on the prevention and detection of fraud to local government officials and employees, private and public sector auditors, and other interested parties;
- Update and publish annually seven Minnesota Legal Compliance Audit Guides, which set the current minimum legal compliance procedures and scope for local government audits; and
- Research, revise, and publish Statements of Position on a variety of topics related to local government legal compliance, finance, and internal controls and publish weekly Avoiding Pitfalls items on issues we identify during audits, inquiries, reviews, and investigations.

RESULTS

Our work improves legal compliance and transparency in the use of local government funds and serves as a deterrent against misuse of public funds.

<i>Type of Measure</i>	<i>Name of Measure</i>	<i>Previous</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Quantity	Views of Avoiding Pitfalls on Website	26,947	55,657	2022/2023
Quantity	Views of Legal/SI Statements of Position on Website	15,724	18,365	2022/2023
Quantity	Views of Investigative Reports and Review Letters on Website	30,415	27,895	2022/2023

The following provisions of Minnesota law are the primary legal authority for these activities:

Minn. Const., art. 5, §§ 1 and 4 (Executive branch).

Minn. Stat., ch. 6 (State Auditor).

Minn. Stat. § 6.52 (Subpoena Power).

Minn. Stat. § 6.53 (Penalty for Failure to Cooperate with OSA).

Minn. Stat. § 6.65 (Legal Compliance Audit Guides).

Minn. Stat. § 609.456 (Mandatory Reporting to OSA for Public Employees and Officials).

Minn. Stat. § 6.67 (Mandatory Reporting to OSA for Public Accountants).

Legal/Special Investigations

Activity Expenditure Overview

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>						
1000 - General	413	438	465	1,537	1,028	1,078
Total	413	438	465	1,537	1,028	1,078
Biennial Change				1,151		104
Biennial % Change				135		5
<u>Expenditures by Category</u>						
Compensation	364	392	426	893	968	1,017
Operating Expenses	49	44	40	244	55	56
Capital Outlay-Real Property				200		
Other Financial Transaction	0	1		200	5	5
Total	413	438	465	1,537	1,028	1,078
<u>Full-Time Equivalents</u>						
	2.63	2.82	2.70	7.25	7.25	7.25

Legal/Special Investigations

Activity Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
1000 - General						
Balance Forward In		73		521		
Direct Appropriation	486	496	986	1,016	1,016	1,016
Transfers In					12	62
Cancellations		131				
Balance Forward Out	73		521			
Expenditures	413	438	465	1,537	1,028	1,078
Biennial Change in Expenditures				1,151		104
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				135		5
Full-Time Equivalents	2.63	2.82	2.70	7.25	7.25	7.25

Program: State Auditor**Activity: Government Information**

<https://www.osa.state.mn.us/>

AT A GLANCE

- Collects, reviews, compiles, and analyzes financial information on approximately 3,300 local units of government.
- Prescribes reporting requirements, the data to be collected, and the way the data is collected.
- Issues 10 to 12 reports annually on local government finances.
- Certifies to the Department of Revenue all cities eligible to receive Local Government Aid and Small Cities Assistance.
- Responds daily to financial questions from local government employees and officials.
- Conducts and issues Best Practices Reviews of local government operations.
- Provides support as well as ongoing training to local government employees and officials throughout the state for the internally developed Small Cities and Towns Accounting System (CTAS) software program.
- Leads annual technology updates and collaborates with users to continue to improve the CTAS program.
- Certifies to the Department of Revenue additional local government aid for cities and counties participating in the Performance Measurement Program.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

We provide comprehensive, comparable financial information from over 3,300 local governments to assist state and local policymakers with policy and spending decisions and to help the public make informed decisions about local governments. We collect and analyze local government financial data including asset forfeitures and forfeiture expenditures. The financial information received is available upon request, through our Office's website, and through regularly published reports provided to the legislature and to the public. We also conduct best practices reviews of local government operations as resources allow. We are funded by an appropriation from the general fund.

SERVICES PROVIDED

We work with local governments to collect and analyze their financial information on a timely basis. We provide transparency of local government finances by providing the following services:

- Respond to local government financial questions;
- Create and provide electronic reporting forms to collect statutorily required data and update forms and instructions as funding sources/uses and statutes change;
- Follow up with entities to improve accuracy and timeliness in statutorily required reporting;
- Provide on-demand online training and support to help local governments successfully complete electronic reporting forms;
- Review data submitted through electronic reporting for consistency and accuracy in reporting;
- Maintain, support, and upgrade the Small Cities and Towns Accounting System (CTAS) software, user manual, and online resources used by over 1,400 small cities and towns throughout Minnesota;
- Teach basic accounting and instruct local government employees and officials throughout the state on how to use CTAS;

- Prescribe the chart of accounts and reporting requirements for cities, towns, and special districts;
- Partner with local government associations to provide training and outreach to members;
- Maintain an extensive database of historical and current local government financial data;
- Provide a user-friendly comparison tool of local government financial information;
- Compile and publish 10 to 12 reports annually;
- Prepare and compile customized data for use by legislative researchers and the media; and
- Conduct special studies as requested by the legislature.

RESULTS

Type of Measure	Name of Measure (Annual)	Previous	Current	Dates
Quantity	Local Governments Meeting Reporting Requirements	94.7%	93.5%	2020/2021
Quantity	Views of Local Government Finance Reports on Website	167,816	153,081	2022/2023
Quantity	Views of Comparison Tools on Website	11,445	21,906	2021/2022
Quantity	CTAS Users Reporting with Exported Files	905	940	2021/2022

The following provisions of Minnesota law are the primary legal authority for these activities:

- Minn. Const., art. 5, §§ 1 and 4 (Executive Branch).
- Minn. Stat., Ch. 6 (State Auditor).
- Minn. Stat. §§ 6.47, 6.475 (CTAS).
- Minn. Stat. §§ 6.74, 6.75 (Collection of Local Government Data, Report).
- Minn. Stat. § 6.745 (Summary Budget Reports).
- Minn. Stat. § 6.756 (Special Districts Reports).
- Minn. Stat. § 6.76 (Lobbying Reports).
- Minn. Stat. § 6.78 (Best Practices Reports).
- Minn. Stat. § 6.91 (Performance Measures Reports).
- Minn. Stat. § 367.36 (Towns Make Financial Report to Office of the State Auditor (OSA)).
- Minn. Stat. § 471.697 (Cities, Towns, Municipal Hospitals and Nursing Homes, Liquor Stores and Public Utility Commissions Make Financial Reports to OSA).
- Minn. Stat. §§ 471.698, 412.02, 412.591 (City Financial Reports).
- Minn. Stat. § 471.6965 (Prescribes Summary Budget Statement for Cities).
- Minn. Stat. § 471.6985 (Municipal Liquor Stores Report to OSA).
- Minn. Stat. § 471.70 (Annual Reports to OSA of Municipalities’ Outstanding Obligations).
- Minn. Stat. § 609.5315 (Forfeiture and Forfeiture Expenditures Reports to OSA and OSA to Legislature).

Government Information

Activity Expenditure Overview

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>						
1000 - General	670	718	993	1,671	1,095	1,095
2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue	14	21	6		17	15
Total	684	740	999	1,671	1,112	1,110
Biennial Change				1,246		(448)
Biennial % Change				88		(17)
<u>Expenditures by Category</u>						
Compensation	617	674	711	838	1,009	1,011
Operating Expenses	67	66	288	671	93	93
Capital Outlay-Real Property				62		
Other Financial Transaction	0			100	10	6
Total	684	740	999	1,671	1,112	1,110
<u>Full-Time Equivalents</u>	6.30	6.83	6.76	8.50	8.50	8.52

Government Information

Activity Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base FY26 FY27	
1000 - General						
Balance Forward In		143		576		
Direct Appropriation	813	792	1,569	1,095	1,095	1,095
Cancellations	0	216				
Balance Forward Out	143		576			
Expenditures	670	718	993	1,671	1,095	1,095
Biennial Change in Expenditures				1,276		(474)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				92		(18)
Full-Time Equivalents	6.14	6.54	6.76	8.50	8.50	8.50

2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue

Balance Forward In	82	77	67	69	72	58
Receipts	10	11	9	3	3	3
Balance Forward Out	77	67	69	72	58	46
Expenditures	14	21	6		17	15
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(30)		26
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				(84)		
Full-Time Equivalents	0.16	0.29				0.02

Program: State Auditor**Activity: Pension**

<https://www.osa.state.mn.us/>

AT A GLANCE

- Monitors approximately 520 local public pension plans with assets of over \$596 million and membership of over 15,000. The majority of these plans provide pensions to volunteer and paid on-call firefighters.
- Responds to thousands of phone calls and emails yearly from firefighters, local government officials, pension plan trustees, and pension plan auditors and advisors.
- Issues an annual financial and investment performance report.
- Certifies individual public pension plans for state aid distributions totaling over \$25 million.
- Convenes the Fire Relief Association Working Group, a stakeholder group that identifies ongoing issues and forwards suggested legislative changes to the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement.
- Called upon for guidance and input in various ad-hoc government workgroups on pension issues.
- Serves as sole authoritative source of local public pension plan information..

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

There are approximately 520 fire relief associations and other types of local public pension plans in Minnesota. We oversee compliance by these plans with various state laws governing plan administration and investment activity. We also provide guidance and information to the plans to support their compliance efforts.

The pension plan data collected, analyzed and reported on by us is relied upon by pension plan boards, plan members, municipal representatives, auditors, investment professionals, policy makers, and the public. We are funded by an appropriation from the general fund. Pension state aid is reduced based on the cost of compliance reviews done by the Pension Division.

SERVICES PROVIDED

We promote the consistent interpretation and application of state laws and local pension plan bylaws by providing the following services:

- Monitor pension plan operations and the administration of pension benefits;
- Collect and review annual reporting forms;
- Issue Statements of Position, monthly newsletters, and legislative updates to inform and educate pension plan trustees;
- Create and publish Sample Bylaw Guides and an annual Selected Relevant Statutes booklet to assist pension plan trustee in meeting statutory requirements;
- Convene the annual Fire Relief Association Working Group, bringing together stakeholders to identify and discuss pressing pension issues and to suggest legislative changes; and
- Publish an annual report on pension plan finances, investments, and administration.
- Provides expert feedback to the legislative Pension Commission on potential fire relief association legislation.

We also have been increasingly called-upon to provide expertise and input on other, ad-hoc committees and workgroups convened at the request of the legislature to address specific public pension issues.

RESULTS

The degree of compliance of local public pension plans with state laws and local bylaws, as measured annually, is excellent, as evidenced by the percentage of pension plans certified for fire state aid shown below.

Type of Measure	Name of Measure	Previous	Current	Dates
Quality	Pension Plans Certified as Eligible to Receive Fire State Aid	100%	100%	2022/2023
Quantity	Views of Pension Newsletter on Website	46,907	50,060	2022/2023
Quantity	Views of Sample Bylaw Guides on Website	2,899	2,451	2022/2023
Quantity	Views of Pension Statements of Position on Website	9,572	10,002	2022/2023

The following provisions of Minnesota law are the primary legal authority for these activities:

Minn. Const., art. 5, §§ 1 and 4 (Executive branch).

Minn. Stat., ch. 6 (State Auditor).

Minn. Stat. § 6.495 (Audits of Relief Associations, Report to Commissioner of Revenue).

Minn. Stat. § 6.496 (Provides Investment Performance Results to Relief Associations).

Minn. Stat. §§ 6.65, 424A.014 (Minimum Audit Procedures for Relief Associations).

Minn. Stat. § 6.72 (Provides Annual Report of Relief Associations to Legislature).

Minn. Stat. § 353G.17 (Filings by Relief Associations to Office of the state Auditor (OSA) for Transfer of Records, Assets, and Liabilities).

Minn. Stat. § 356.216 (Filings by Relief Associations to OSA of Actuarial Valuations).

Minn. Stat. § 356.219 (Public Pension Funds Investment Reporting).

Minn. Stat. § 356A.06 (Prepares Acknowledgment Forms for use by Pension Plans and Brokers).

Minn. Stat. § 424A.014 (Filings by Relief Associations to OSA of Audited Financial Statements).

Minn. Stat. § 424A.016 (Certifications by Relief Associations to OSA of Individual Account Allocations, Filings by Relief Associations to OSA of Bylaws and Amendments).

Minn. Stat. § 424A.02 (Determines Compliance with Financial Requirements by Relief Associations).

Minn. Stat. § 424A.05 (Authority to Approve Correction of Erroneous Deposits).

Minn. Stat. § 424A.091 (Determines Compliance with Financial Requirements by Relief Associations).

Minn. Stat. § 424A.092 (Determines Compliance with Financial Requirements by Relief Associations).

Minn. Stat. § 424A.093 (Determines Compliance with Financial Requirements by Relief Associations).

Minn. Stat. § 424A.095 (Investments)

Minn. Stat. § 471.6175 (OPEB Trust Reports to OSA).

Minn. Stat. § 477B.042 (Filings by Relief Associations to OSA of Aid Allocation Agreements).

Pension

Activity Expenditure Overview

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>						
1000 - General	501	512	616	956	798	798
Total	501	512	616	956	798	798
Biennial Change				559		24
Biennial % Change				55		2
<u>Expenditures by Category</u>						
Compensation	444	460	562	593	688	687
Operating Expenses	56	52	53	263	100	101
Other Financial Transaction	1			100	10	10
Total	501	512	616	956	798	798
<u>Full-Time Equivalents</u>						
	4.61	4.74	5.14	5.25	5.25	5.25

Pension

Activity Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
1000 - General						
Balance Forward In		92		158		
Direct Appropriation	593	606	774	798	798	798
Cancellations		186				
Balance Forward Out	92		158			
Expenditures	501	512	616	956	798	798
Biennial Change in Expenditures				559		24
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				55		2
Full-Time Equivalents	4.61	4.74	5.14	5.25	5.25	5.25

Program: State Auditor**Activity: Operations**

<https://www.osa.state.mn.us/>

AT A GLANCE

- Provides accounting services, facilities management, technology support, and human resources services for approximately 80 employees in six offices, two worksites, and client sites.
- Prepares and maintains the biennial budget for the Office.
- Updates and maintains the Small Cities and Towns Accounting System (CTAS) that helps small local governments follow standard accounting practices and maintain accurate accounting records.
- Updates, collects, and processes local government electronic reporting forms submitted to the Office.
- Maintains the central database for the Office.
- Hosts and maintains a website to increase transparency in local government finances that serve approximately 10,000 unique visitors each month

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

We support all activities within the office by providing accounting, facilities management, technology support, and human resource services for all divisions. We are funded by an appropriation from the general fund. The Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Division funding is accounted for in the Miscellaneous Special Revenue Fund, and costs related to supporting the TIF division are allocated directly to that appropriation.

SERVICES PROVIDED

We support all divisions within the office enabling each division to pursue identified strategies and to achieve desired results by providing the following services:

- Prepare and maintain the office's biennial budget;
- Process payroll for approximately 80 employees;
- Prepare purchase orders and pay invoices;
- Bill for and deposit payments for audit services;
- Maintain furniture and equipment inventory;
- Coordinate the lease renewals for and maintenance of six offices;
- Manage all the technology needs of the office;
- Maintain an integrated database for all divisions;
- Update and maintain the Small Cities and Towns Accounting System for local governments;
- Work with each division to collect, process, and improve electronic reporting forms;
- Provide research and strategic planning support on technology needs;
- Implement new software solutions and enhance the functionality of existing applications.
- Provide network and personal computer installation, support, and maintenance;
- Install, configure, and maintain servers, operating systems, and cloud infrastructure;
- Procure, track, and manage IT equipment, software, and licenses;
- Coordinate the recruitment and hiring of employees;
- Educate employees on benefit options; and
- Work to ensure the office follows state bargaining agreements.

RESULTS

We leverage technology to help the office perform its work more effectively and efficiently.

Type of Measure	Name of Measure	Previous	Current	Dates
Quantity	Actions performed in the State Auditor’s Form Entry System (SAFES)	82,901	78,728	2022/2023
Quantity	Visitors to the Office of the State Auditor’s (OSA) Website	160,511	209,434	2022/2023
Quality	Views of Website documents and pages	1,816,173	1,772,965	2022/2023

The following provisions of Minnesota law are the primary legal authority for these activities:

- Minn. Const., art. 5, §§ 1 and 4 (Executive branch).
- Minn. Stat., ch. 6 (State Auditor).
- Minn. Stat. § 6.475 ((Electronic) CTAS).
- Minn. Stat. § 6.496 (Provides Electronic Performance Results to Relief Associations).
- Minn. Stat. § 6.72 (Relief Associations Report to OSA/OSA Reports to Legislature).
- Minn. Stat. § 6.74 (Collection of Local Government Data).
- Minn. Stat. § 367.36 (Towns Make Financial Reports to OSA).
- Minn. Stat. § 469.175 (TIF Districts reports to OSA).
- Minn. Stat. § 471.6175 (Electronic OPEB Trust Reports to OSA).
- Minn. Stat. § 471.697 (Cities, Towns, Municipal Hospitals and Nursing Homes, Liquor Stores and Public Utility Commissions Financial Reports to OSA).
- Minn. Stat. § 471.698 (Cities Make Financial Reports to OSA).
- Minn. Stat. § 471.6985 (Municipal Liquor Stores Report to OSA).
- Minn. Stat. § 471.70 (Annual Reports to OSA of Municipalities’ Outstanding Obligations).
- Minn. Stat. § 609.5315 (Forfeiture reports to OSA).

Operations

Activity Expenditure Overview

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>						
1000 - General	454	538	489	1,275	895	895
Total	454	538	489	1,275	895	895
Biennial Change				772		26
Biennial % Change				78		2
<u>Expenditures by Category</u>						
Compensation	333	325	405	442	515	570
Operating Expenses	100	180	84	373	170	115
Capital Outlay-Real Property				300	50	50
Other Financial Transaction	20	33	0	160	160	160
Total	454	538	489	1,275	895	895
<u>Full-Time Equivalents</u>						
	3.66	3.50	5.15	4.51	4.51	4.51

Operations

Activity Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
1000 - General						
Balance Forward In		135		380		
Direct Appropriation	589	534	869	895	895	895
Transfers In		100				
Cancellations		232				
Balance Forward Out	135		380			
Expenditures	454	538	489	1,275	895	895
Biennial Change in Expenditures				772		26
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				78		2
Full-Time Equivalents	3.66	3.50	5.15	4.51	4.51	4.51

Program: State Auditor**Activity: Constitutional**

<https://www.osa.state.mn.us/>

AT A GLANCE

- Conducts continual outreach and provides educational resources to state and local elected officials, local government finance professionals, and the public.
- Works closely with the legislature and governor on appropriations and policy issues to ensure effective Office of the State Auditor (OSA) oversight of over \$60 billion in state and local funding to increase transparency of local government finances.
- Maintains contact with statewide media to help Minnesotans better understand the critical role and responsibilities of the OSA and to raise public awareness of local government.
- Provides direct administrative support to the State Auditor.
- Provides support to each OSA Division: Audit, TIF, Pension, Government Information and Special Investigations.
- Supports the State Auditor's service on six state boards and the Executive Council.
- Supports the office's work as liaison to Governor's office and other government entities.
- Supports General Counsel's work as proxy on the following boards: State Board of Investment and Minnesota Housing Finance Authority.
- Convene stakeholders in working groups to address issues in local government oversight.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

The State Auditor is an independent constitutional officer elected statewide to provide oversight of over 4,300 units of local government. She oversees over \$60 billion in annual local and state government finances. The Auditor helps to ensure integrity and accountability in local government financial activities.

The Constitution Division provides senior-level management and leadership, supports the State Auditor on six state boards and the State Executive Council, and ensures that stakeholders and the public are kept updated on our work. We are funded by a general fund appropriation.

SERVICES PROVIDED

We accomplish our goal of providing effective oversight of local government finances through the following services:

- Disseminate the extensive knowledge of local government finances and accounting expertise of OSA to policy makers, the media, stakeholders, and the public;
- Provide outreach to stakeholders to proactively address emerging finance and compliance issues;
- Communicate consistently with the public to provide a better understanding of local government and instill confidence in local government finances. The State Auditor maintains an active public schedule to support this effort;
- Propose, pursue, advocate, and testify for legislation that increases accountability, transparency, and the understanding of local government finances;
- Work with statewide media to communicate the work of the OSA and provide transparency of local government finances;

- Improve the understanding of the role and responsibilities of the OSA and the State Auditor for legislators, public finance officials, other stakeholders and the public.
-

The following provisions of Minnesota law are the primary legal authority for these activities:

Minn. Const., art. 5, §§ 1 and 4 (Executive branch).

Minn. Stat., ch. 6 (State Auditor).

Constitutional

Activity Expenditure Overview

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>						
1000 - General	389	434	589	1,053	642	668
Total	389	434	589	1,053	642	668
Biennial Change				819		(332)
Biennial % Change				99		(20)
<u>Expenditures by Category</u>						
Compensation	336	356	465	487	596	622
Operating Expenses	50	76	121	563	43	43
Other Financial Transaction	3	2	3	3	3	3
Total	389	434	589	1,053	642	668
<u>Full-Time Equivalents</u>						
	2.65	2.88	3.52	4.25	4.25	4.25

Constitutional

Activity Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
1000 - General						
Balance Forward In		13		601		
Direct Appropriation	381	387	1,040	449	449	449
Transfers In	20	150	150	3	193	219
Cancellations		115				
Balance Forward Out	12		601			
Expenditures	389	434	589	1,053	642	668
Biennial Change in Expenditures				819		(332)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				99		(20)
Full-Time Equivalents	2.65	2.88	3.52	4.25	4.25	4.25

Program: State Auditor**Activity: Tax Increment Financing**<https://www.osa.state.mn.us/>**AT A GLANCE**

- Provides compliance oversight of approximately 1,670 Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts administered by approximately 385 development authorities.
- Collects and reviews approximately 1,670 annual TIF reports, 125 TIF plans, and 200 other filings annually.
- Publishes annual TIF Legislative Report.
- Provides training to local government officials, such as county auditors, city clerks or administrators, and economic development professionals.
- Provides resources to promote TIF compliance through the TIF County Guide, Statements of Position, webinars, instructional videos, and articles

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

Tax increment financing was created to help businesses and communities redevelop blighted areas, expand tax base, create jobs, construct housing, and assist development that would not otherwise occur “but for the use of tax increment.” Tax increment funding comes from public dollars. We support local government compliance with the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Act, which provides the parameters and controls around proper handling, use and reporting of tax increment funds. We are the sole source of comprehensive comparable data on TIF activity in Minnesota. Some of this data is used in the annual TIF Legislative Report to inform lawmakers and the public on the uses of TIF. Our oversight work serves as a deterrent to misuse of TIF. We are funded by a special revenue fund statutory appropriation.

SERVICES PROVIDED

We work to support local government compliance with the TIF Act by providing the following services:

- Collect and review financial information annually to identify non-compliance and to help communities come into legal compliance;
- Educate a broad audience, including local officials, lawmakers, financial consultants, state agencies, the public, and the media, on the TIF Act by publishing Statements of Position, and articles in the State Auditor’s Weekly Update; providing online training videos; conducting trainings and webinars; speaking at conferences; providing administrative resources; and responding to requests for information;
- Publish a Tax Increment Financing County Guide to assist county officials in meeting their responsibilities under the TIF Act;
- Consult with local government associations, legislative staff, and others regarding amendments to the TIF Act to ensure ongoing effective oversight; and
- Provide expert feedback to legislative tax committees on potential TIF legislation.

RESULTS

<i>Type of Measure</i>	<i>Name of Measure</i>	<i>Previous</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Quantity	Non-Compliance Findings Resolved	100%	100%	2022/2023
Quantity	Views of TIF Statements of Position on Website	6,616	5,732	2022/2023
Quantity	Individuals Viewing Online Training Videos and Attending Trainings	1,309	1,810	2022/2023
Quantity	Annual TIF Reports Filed on Time	98%	99%	2022/2023

Us The following provisions of Minnesota law are the primary legal authority for these activities:

Minn. Const., art. 5, §§ 1 and 4 (Executive branch).

Minn. Stat., ch. 6 (State Auditor).

Minn. Stat. § 469.175 (TIF Districts Report to the Office of the State Auditor).

Minn. Stat. § 469.177 (Enforcement Costs; Correction of Errors).

Minn. Stat. § 469.1771 (TIF Oversight).

Tax Increment Financing

Activity Expenditure Overview

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>						
2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue	786	829	888	976	1,009	1,054
Total	786	829	888	976	1,009	1,054
Biennial Change				249		199
Biennial % Change				15		11
<u>Expenditures by Category</u>						
Compensation	694	719	812	699	870	914
Operating Expenses	86	104	75	252	114	115
Capital Outlay-Real Property				10	10	10
Other Financial Transaction	7	6	0	15	15	15
Total	786	829	888	976	1,009	1,054
<u>Full-Time Equivalents</u>						
	6.31	6.51	6.49	6.69	6.69	6.69

Tax Increment Financing

Activity Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue						
Balance Forward In	3,168	3,185	3,121	3,453	3,347	3,038
Transfers In	803	765	1,220	870	700	700
Balance Forward Out	3,185	3,121	3,453	3,347	3,038	2,684
Expenditures	786	829	888	976	1,009	1,054
Biennial Change in Expenditures				249		199
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				15		11
Full-Time Equivalents	6.31	6.51	6.49	6.69	6.69	6.69

Change Item Title: Operating Adjustment

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
General Fund				
Expenditures	729	1,307	1,317	1,325
Revenues	729	1,307	1,317	1,325
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact = (Expenditures – Revenues)	0	0	0	0
FTEs	7.75	12.5	12.5	12.5

Request:

The State Auditor requests an increase in our General Fund Direct Appropriation for an operating adjustment. Since 89 percent of the Office’s expenditures are related to salaries and benefits, this request will allow us to retain current staff. Projected compensation cost increases continue to put pressure on our ability to keep all current staff within the base budget, and all current staff are essential to meet our mission. This request represents a 7.1 percent increase in the General Fund Direct Appropriation for the 2026/2027 biennium.

Rationale/Background:

The State Auditor oversees local government finances for Minnesota taxpayers by helping to ensure financial integrity and accountability in local governmental financial activities. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the proposed General Fund Direct Appropriation pays the salaries and benefits of staff who review documents and financial data, issue financial reports, and review complaints related to the finances and legal compliance of local government entities. Staff also provide essential training and support to accounting staff in local governments to help them properly complete their financial reporting requirements, establish proper internal controls to safeguard assets, and investigate reports of financial misfeasance, malfeasance and nonfeasance by local government employees and officials.

Projected increases in salary and benefit costs put pressure on our ability to retain all essential staff. This request will allow us to retain the necessary qualified staff to meet our mission.

Proposal:

The State Auditor proposes an increase of \$2,036,000 in our General Fund Direct Appropriation for the 2026/2027 biennium. These funds will be used to pay salaries, benefits and related operating costs of current staff and allow us to avoid reducing staff by approximately 12.5 full-time equivalents (FTE).

Impact on Children and Families:

Children and families, particularly those who face financial challenges, depend on local government to work well. Minnesota implements most of its safety net, health and human services, and other everyday infrastructure work through local government entities. The largest users of those services are children and families. A basic component of ensuring the effectiveness of local government is oversight of local funds. Funds used well go further and the examinations the OSA performs support that goal.

Equity and Inclusion:

Accurate data is essential to uncovering, understanding, and eradicating discrimination and disparities. We are advocating for increased demographic data collection and highlighting the disparities we find in our current data to a larger degree.

Tribal Consultation:

Does this proposal have a substantial direct effect on one or more of the Minnesota Tribal governments?

- Yes
- No

Results:

Currently, we complete about 66 audits per year, along with overseeing the financial data of over 4,000 local governmental units. Without an operating adjustment, we project needing to cut our work products by approximately 12.5%, due to the loss of 13 FTE.

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Most recent data	Projected change
Number of Financial Audits Conducted by the OSA	Quantity	A review of internal records.	66 Financial Audits Conducted.	The OSA expects the number of Financial Audits conducted each year to remain stable at 66.
Number of Audit Hours Per Year	Quantity	A review of internal records	55,280 audit hours	The OSA expects an increase in the number of audit hours due to new accounting and auditing standards.

Change Item Title: Trainers

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
General Fund				
Expenditures	275	292	304	319
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact = (Expenditures – Revenues)	275	292	304	319
FTEs	2	2	2	2

Request:

The State Auditor requests an increase in our General Fund Direct Appropriation to fund two trainer positions. This request represents a 1.9 percent increase in the General Fund Direct Appropriation for the 2026/2027 biennium.

Rationale/Background:

The national shortage of public finance staff is creating challenges for Minnesota local government entities and the Office of the State Auditor (OSA). The shortage is causing more turnover in the staff that manage and oversee tax dollars. This turnover depletes institutional knowledge and technical experience, and increases the risk of error, waste tied to inefficiency, and blind spots in detecting fraud. In response to a smaller pool of applicants for public finance positions, governmental entities are widening the range of skills and experiences they will accept to fill vacant positions.

All of this adds up to a decrease in experience and shifts in the technical knowledge of Minnesota’s public finance staff. An essential response to those changes is to increase and recalibrate training available to those managing and overseeing tax dollars at the local level.

Local government entities are packing the OSA’s existing training programs and asking for further opportunities. When the OSA can add in-house training, we are able to increase the number of applicants for our vacancies, particularly in our Audit Practice Division. Because this shortage is driven by what are expected to be ongoing demographic changes in the workforce, this need is likely to continue well into the future.

Proposal:

The State Auditor proposes an increase of \$551,000 in our General Fund Direct Appropriation for the 2026/2027 biennium. These funds will be used to pay the salary and benefits of two new training staff/2 full-time equivalent (FTE). The funds will also be used to pay for training resources and basic computer equipment (personal computer, monitor, etc.) for each position.

One trainer will focus on external training available to external audiences (e.g., local government staff), the other trainer will focus on training for internal staff, particularly staff in the Audit Practice Division.

The external training position will review our current training programs for improvements in effectiveness and efficiency. The trainer will evaluate and manage the requests for new training from local government entities. The trainer will also review concerns arising from audits and investigations to determine new training needs of

local public finance staff and local leaders. Then, they will coordinate production of training programs to respond to those concerns.

The internal training position will support the training of OSA staff by identifying training needs and coordinating a comprehensive training program. Currently, individual supervisors must evaluate staff, recommend training, and monitor progress while trying to manage the completion of audits and other oversight duties. The new training staff will reduce this extra workload by directly assuming training duties and increasing the efficiency of staff development. This will reduce the time needed to get new auditors up to speed, improve the effectiveness of training, and free up supervisors to focus on managing audits.

As the need is already pressing, we will begin the hiring process as soon as funds are available. We expect it will take about a year to fully implement this new training team, though they will be improving our training opportunities and reducing the workload on our current team within months.

Impact on Children and Families:

Because so much of our governmental programs that support children and families are implemented through local government entities, it is imperative that local government funds are used accurately and effectively. Anything that prevents waste, fraud, and abuse of public funds makes more resources available to children and families.

Equity and Inclusion:

Increasing racial and gender diversity in the public finance field is essential to addressing the shortage of public finance staff. As our office continues its efforts to increase diversity through hiring, providing an environment in which staff development needs and opportunities are prioritized, for both new and experienced staff will help assure retention of diverse staff, as well as attract an increasingly broad group of applicants.

Tribal Consultation:

Does this proposal have a substantial direct effect on one or more of the Minnesota Tribal governments?

- Yes
- No

Results:

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Most recent data	Projected change
Impact on quality of governmental accounting in Minnesota	Quantity and Quality	We will summarize findings data from annual audits, agreed upon procedures, and investigations	Currently, we are seeing an uptick of findings like failure to reconcile bank statements, failure to accurately categorize funds that indicate a lack of experience and technical knowledge	Our goal is to see a reduction in findings due to inexperience and lack of technical knowledge

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Most recent data	Projected change
Impact of effectiveness of OSA staff	Quality	Annual performance reviews	We are seeing needs for more training on technical topics in our reviews	Fewer needs for training on technical topics in our reviews
Retention of OSA staff	Quantity	Amount of staff turnover	We do not have data on the retention of our newest cohort of staff since they are new	Higher rates of retention of our newest cohort of hires

Change Item Title: Data Warehouse

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
General Fund				
Expenditures	228	228	130	137
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	114	114	65	68
Revenues	114	114	65	68
Net Fiscal Impact = (Expenditures – Revenues)	228	228	130	137
FTEs	1	1	1	1

Request:

The State Auditor requests an increase in our General Fund Direct Appropriation to build a cloud-based data warehouse that combines the Office of the State Auditor’s (OSA) data in a unified way to provide advanced reporting and data analytics capabilities for the office. This request represents a 1.6 percent increase in the General Fund Direct Appropriation for the 2026/2027 biennium. One third of the costs will benefit the work that our Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Division performs and will be funded by the enforcement deduction received from tax increment captured each year.

Rationale/Background:

The OSA collects a significant amount of data and produces reports yearly for counties, cities, townships, special districts, tax increment financing authorities, and pension funds. The process of producing these reports is very manual and requires a great amount of staff time to cleanse, transform and validate the data. Currently, the office doesn’t have a modern data warehouse in place to manage the office’s data. Data is scattered across various siloed systems and spreadsheets, limiting the organization’s ability to aggregate data from a unified source to take advantage of advanced data analytics and predictive modeling capabilities needed to support decision-making and optimize operational efficiencies.

Additionally, there are limited internal reports, dashboards and tools to aid staff in analyzing the data, spotting trends, and gaining insights that could support the office’s fiscal oversight responsibilities. The office could benefit from modern data warehouse and analytic tools to better streamline the report generation process to reduce manual processes, improve the user experience, and provide more insights to decision makers.

Proposal:

The State Auditor proposes an increase of \$456,000 in our General Fund Direct Appropriation for the 2026/2027 biennium. These funds will pay to design and build a modern cloud-based data warehouse to make data more accessible, and to support the creation of reports, interactive dashboards, and data visualizations that will be used by OSA staff and external clients, partners, stakeholders, and decisions makers to gain insights, spot trends, and facilitate decision making. These funds will also support hiring a contractor to design and build the data warehouse, reports, and dashboards and one (1) full-time equivalent (FTE) data engineer to support the office's ongoing data and analytics needs.

Impact on Children and Families:

Children and families, particularly those who face financial challenges, depend on local government to work well. Minnesota implements most of its safety net, health and human services, and other everyday infrastructure work through local government entities. The largest users of those services are children and families. A basic component of ensuring the effectiveness of local government is oversight of local funds. Funds used well go further and the examinations the OSA performs support that goal.

Equity and Inclusion:

Accurate data is essential to uncovering, understanding, and eradicating discrimination and disparities. We are advocating for increased demographic data collection and highlighting the disparities we find in our current data to a larger degree.

Tribal Consultation:

Does this proposal have a substantial direct effect on one or more of the Minnesota Tribal governments?

- Yes
- No

IT Costs:

<i>Category</i>	<i>FY 2026</i>	<i>FY 2027</i>	<i>FY 2028</i>	<i>FY 2029</i>	<i>FY 2030</i>	<i>FY 2031</i>
Payroll	140	151	160	170	181	193
Professional/Technical Contracts	156	156				
Infrastructure	35	35	35	35	35	35
Hardware	5				5	
Software	11	8	8	8	11	8
Training						

Results:

Currently, we complete about 66 audits per year, along with overseeing the financial data of over 4,000 local governmental units. Implementing a modern data warehouse with advanced data analytics capabilities allows for increased operational efficiencies, improved data quality, enhanced data accessibility, and improved user experience. increase operational efficiency, improve data quality, enhance data accessibility, and improve user experience that supports the office’s fiscal oversight responsibilities.

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Most recent data	<i>Projected Change</i>	<i>Date</i>
Hours spent generating reports	Quantity	Survey	N/A	The number of hours spent generating reports is reduced by 50%.	2026

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Most recent data	<i>Projected Change</i>	<i>Date</i>
Average query performance time	Quantity	Database log	Minutes	Query performances is reduced from minutes to Seconds.	2026
Percent improvement in data quality and integrity	Quality	Error reports	N/A	Error rate is less than 2%.	2027
Percent increase in operational efficiencies	Quality	Survey	N/A	A 90% increase in operational efficiencies through the reduction in manual processes and faster decision-making enabled by data analytics capabilities.	2027
Percent increase in user adoption	Results	Report views	<10%	The use of Dashboards and reports for data driven decisions increases by more than 25%.	2027

State Auditor

FY 2026-27 Biennial Budget Change Item

Change Item Title: IT Auditors

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
General Fund				
Expenditures	272	288	309	324
Revenues	272	288	309	324
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact = (Expenditures – Revenues)	0	0	0	0
FTEs	2	2	2	2

Request:

The State Auditor requests an increase in our General Fund Direct Appropriation to fund two IT Auditor positions. Information Technology (IT) plays a prominent role in the internal controls and financial management of local governments. It is critical that the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) have staff that specialize in IT auditing to properly perform our oversight of local government finances. This request represents a 2.0 percent increase in the General Fund Direct Appropriation for the 2026/2027 biennium.

Rationale/Background:

Cities, counties, and special districts rely heavily on computerized systems (IT) to manage their finances and to help ensure adequate internal controls exist. Also, the State of Minnesota relies on IT systems in the administration of federally assisted programs. In the past, OSA audit staff reviewed these systems and assessed their impact on internal controls, the fair presentation of their financial statements, and their compliance with single audit requirements and state laws. As these systems and professional auditing standards have become increasingly complex and the reliance on IT systems has become more prominent, the need for audit staff that specialize in IT auditing has become more apparent.

The funding of two IT Audit positions will allow the OSA to perform IT Audits of our clients. These audits will help support the other audit work performed by staff and help determine if clients have designed their IT systems appropriately.

Proposal:

The State Auditor proposes an increase of \$560,000 in our General Fund Direct Appropriation for the 2026/2027 biennium. These funds will be used to pay the salary and benefits of two new IT Audit staff/2 full-time equivalents (FTE). The funds will also be used to pay for basic computer equipment (personal computer, monitor, etc.) and ongoing training for each position.

The new IT Audit staff will support the audits of local governments.

Impact on Children and Families:

Children and families, particularly those who face financial challenges, depend on local government to work well. Minnesota implements most of its safety net, health and human services, and other everyday infrastructure work through local government entities. The largest users of those services are children and families. A basic component of ensuring the effectiveness of local government is oversight of local funds. Funds used well go further and the examinations the OSA performs support that goal.

Equity and Inclusion:

Accurate data is essential to uncovering, understanding, and eradicating discrimination and disparities. We are advocating for increased demographic data collection and highlighting the disparities we find in our current data to a larger degree.

Tribal Consultation:

Does this proposal have a substantial direct effect on one or more of the Minnesota Tribal governments?

- Yes
- No

Results:

The addition of two IT auditors would provide additional expertise and support in our performance of audits of local and State governments in accordance with professional standards. The IT auditors will use their expertise in the IT component of the audit, this would allow audit staff to focus on the areas of the audit where their expertise lies, which results in a more efficient audit. IT auditors have knowledge of IT systems and can plan and perform audits, as well as assist audit staff in performing IT audits to ensure professional standards are met. It is common practice for State Audit organizations and CPA firms to hire IT auditors to assist with this increasing complex component of the audit. This will also allow the OSA to maintain our understanding of an increasingly complex and growing audit area. Lower audit costs are not expected by the addition of IT auditors as increases in/changes to professional standards do not usually result in lower audit costs.

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Most recent data	Projected change
Number of State and Local Audit Clients Served	Quantity	Number of audit reports issued.	66	66 (see note 1)
Peer Review Quality Standards (See note 2)	Quality/Results	Peer Review with a opinion of 'pass'.	2021 Peer Review report with an opinion of 'pass'.	Continued Peer Review report with an opinion of 'pass'.

Notes:

1. The addition of IT auditors is not intended to increase the quantity of audits performed, rather to continue to perform audits in accordance with professional standards using varying levels of auditor experience efficiently.
2. We participate in the National State Auditor’s Association Peer Review Program. Maintenance of an appropriate internal quality control system is essential to performing effective audits that comply with professional standards. The results of the two previous Peer Reviews concluded that we met professional requirements. The Peer Review is performed every three years with the last ones being performed in 2018 and 2021.