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**STATE AUDITOR**

# 2020

## IN REVIEW

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## 2020: Pivoting During Crisis

2020 was a challenging year for Delawareans, as the COVID-19 global pandemic changed so many facets of our lives. In the State Auditor's Office, we pivoted from carrying out not only our traditional responsibilities as the state's fiscal watchdog, but also to completing projects that provided taxpayers with accurate, trustworthy data on how Delaware's state agencies and officials were responding to the pandemic.

My team and I sought to bring transparency and accountability to state-level activities by examining the quality of the data the state reported on COVID-19 cases and detailing exactly how the state spent federal relief funds.

Through it all, we continued to perform and release meaningful financial reviews of how taxpayer dollars were spent. Thanks to interactive tools I introduced in 2019, we did a better job than ever of identifying fraud, waste and abuse.

During calendar year 2020, we released over 70 engagements, including 28 in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) that examined the financial operations, performance management, and statutory compliance and including review of government operations and financial oversight of essential public services of 45 state agencies and 69 other entities.

Be assured that I will continue to serve taxpayers and our state by demanding transparency and accountability from our state agencies throughout 2021.

In the meantime, here are some of our key accomplishments from 2020.

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### KEY INITIATIVES

**During 2020, I embarked on several initiatives to position our state as a national leader and to better serve Delawareans.**

#### COVID-related work

In March, I created a regional task force of state auditors and comptrollers from New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland to collaborate on how to ensure transparent oversight of our states' spending on coronavirus-related measures, such as acquiring personal protective equipment (PPE) for front-line healthcare workers.



At least **11 states and U.S. territories** are using the framework I created with four other states' fiscal watchdogs to audit the quality of the COVID-19 data being released to the public.

- ✓ **Released** a special report comparing Delaware’s COVID-19 case analytics to a national benchmark and best practice and recommended ways to improve communications to the public
- ✓ **Initiated** the Auditor’s Office Follow Up Program to track implementation of prior audit recommendations
- ✓ **Created** an interactive CARES Act Fund Tracker website
- ✓ **Worked** with the Offices of Inspector Generals to centralize reports on a single web portal
- ✓ **Represented** Delaware on four national committees

I also conceived the first-of-its-kind national COVID-19 Data Quality Audit template. My team and I worked with fiscal watchdogs from Delaware, Florida, Mississippi, Ohio and Pennsylvania – and with the National State Auditors Association – to develop a framework for auditors to evaluate their states’ COVID-19 data reporting and monitoring. At least 11 other states and 1 U.S. territory are using the framework for audits now, and they will release their results throughout 2021.

In November, I unveiled the interactive Delaware CARES Act Fund Tracker, which details how Delaware allocated its \$927.2 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act money. Governments were given until Dec. 30, 2020, to distribute the funds; as of Dec. 24, 2020, \$640.86 million of Delaware’s share had been allocated to state agencies.

In December, I issued a special report on the quality of the COVID-19 data Delaware’s Department of Health and Social Services released during the early months of the pandemic.

The report, “Delaware’s COVID-19 Data Dashboard

Opportunities and Successes: How Well Does Delaware’s Data Tool Allow for an Accurate and Timely Response to the Pandemic?” used information from state agencies’ websites to determine how Delaware’s approach to virus mitigation compared to best practices and tools used by other states. Ultimately, the report determined Delaware was doing a relatively good job in reporting and monitoring COVID-19 case data, with room for improvement.

## Other fiscal watchdog work

Among the purposes of the Auditor’s Office are improving government efficiency and identifying ways to save taxpayer money. My team is an integral partner in establishing and maintaining good governance for all Delawareans.

To reinforce collaboration with other state officials, I created the Follow-Up Program to review whether previously audited agencies have implemented auditors’ recommendations for improvement. Our audits and special reports identify opportunities for the State of Delaware to improve the way it does business, and this program will evaluate whether agencies are implementing our recommendations to improve how they spend taxpayer dollars.



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
 Since July 1, 2020, tips submitted through the State Auditor’s fraud hotline and app have **more than doubled** compared with the previous year.

## Looking Ahead

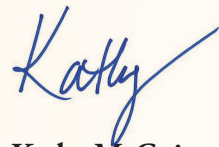
As we enter 2021 with hope, I remain confident that Delaware and our nation will emerge from this global pandemic stronger and more efficient.

Throughout 2021, I will continue to fight for Delaware's taxpayers – and that includes continuing to push for the funding necessary for the Auditor's Office to operate at peak performance. The Auditor's Office is the independent eye for how taxpayer dollars are spent, and fully funding this office can only lead to greater savings and efficiencies throughout state government.

Change is never easy – but it's necessary to grow and move forward. And that is what we will do in 2021.

Thank you and stay safe. The best is yet to come.

Sincerely,



**Kathy McGuinness**

*State Auditor*



### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The State Auditor's Office was among the first to participate in and serve as a prototype for [oversight.gov](https://www.oversight.gov) – a national **publicly accessible, searchable website** containing the latest public reports from federal Offices of Inspectors General who are members of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE).