



**Office of the Washington State Auditor**  
**Pat McCarthy**

# **Accountability Audit Report**

## **City of Seattle**

**For the period July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018**

**Published June 24, 2019**

**Report No. 1024096**





**Office of the Washington State Auditor**  
**Pat McCarthy**

June 24, 2019

Mayor and City Council  
City of Seattle  
Seattle, Washington

**Report on Accountability**

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The State Auditor's Office takes seriously our role of providing state and local governments with assurance and accountability as the independent auditor of public accounts. In this way, we strive to help government work better, cost less, deliver higher value and earn greater public trust.

Independent audits provide essential accountability and transparency for City operations. This information is valuable to management, the governing body and public stakeholders when assessing the government's stewardship of public resources.

The attached comprises our independent audit report on the City's compliance with applicable requirements and safeguarding of public resources for the areas we examined. We appreciate the opportunity to work with your staff and we value your cooperation during the audit.

Sincerely,

Pat McCarthy  
State Auditor  
Olympia, WA

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## AUDIT RESULTS

This report describes the overall results and conclusions for the areas we examined. In most of the areas we examined, City operations complied with applicable state laws, regulations, and its own policies, and provided adequate controls over safeguarding of public resources.

As referenced above, we noted certain matters that we communicated to City management and Mayor and City Council in a letter dated May 22, 2019, related to Seattle Municipal Courts trust accounts and accounts receivable, procurement sole source, and assets susceptible to loss and theft. We appreciate the City's commitment to resolving those matters.

### About the audit

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of the City of Seattle from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.

Management is responsible for ensuring compliance and adequate safeguarding of public resources from fraud, loss or abuse. This includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls relevant to these objectives.

This audit was conducted under the authority of RCW 43.09.260, which requires the Office of the State Auditor to examine the financial affairs of all local governments. Our audit involved performing procedures to obtain evidence about the City's uses of public resources, compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity or area. Instead, based on our risk assessment for the year ended June 30, 2018, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of fraud, loss, abuse, or noncompliance. The following areas were examined during this audit period:

- Credit Cards: controls and compliance of credit card usage
- Procurement: compliance over sole source procured contracts
- Procurement: compliance over piggybacking procured contracts
- Assets susceptible to loss and theft: controls and compliance over assets
- Seattle Municipal Court: controls and compliance over court cash receipting, non-cash adjustments, bail receipting, collections, trust accounts, accounts receivable, and system access
- Fuel cards: controls over fuel card usage
- Payroll: controls over payroll adjustments
- Citizen concerns related to potential misuse of public resources, 2016 housing levy funds, Utility Discount Program, and Council Briefing meeting minutes

## RELATED REPORTS

### **Financial**

Our opinion on the City's financial statements and compliance with federal grant program requirements is provided in a separate report, which includes the City's financial statements. That report is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

### **Federal grant programs**

We evaluated internal controls and tested compliance with the federal program requirements, as applicable, for the City's major federal programs, which are listed in the Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs section of the separate financial statement and single audit report. That report includes one federal finding regarding internal controls and compliance over the federal reporting for the Community Development Block Grant. That report is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

### **Other reports**

During the current audit period, the State Auditor's Office issued an examination report on the City's compliance with the state of Washington's Energy Independence Act. That report is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITY

The City of Seattle is the largest city in King County and the State, with a population of over 700,000 citizens. The City has a mayor-council form of government with nine elected Council Members, an elected Mayor and an elected City Attorney.

The City's budget for 2018 was about \$5.6 billion, including \$1.3 billion for the General Fund. It has approximately 12,000 employees and provides a full range of services including water, drainage and wastewater, solid waste, electric power, police, Municipal Court, fire, emergency medical, parks and recreation (including four golf courses), planning and economic development, and municipal libraries.

| <b>Contact information related to this report</b> |  |
|---|--|
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*Information current as of report publish date.*

### **Audit history**

You can find current and past audit reports for the City of Seattle at <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

## ABOUT THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

The State Auditor's Office is established in the state's Constitution and is part of the executive branch of state government. The State Auditor is elected by the citizens of Washington and serves four-year terms.

We work with our audit clients and citizens to achieve our vision of government that works for citizens, by helping governments work better, cost less, deliver higher value, and earn greater public trust.

In fulfilling our mission to hold state and local governments accountable for the use of public resources, we also hold ourselves accountable by continually improving our audit quality and operational efficiency and developing highly engaged and committed employees.

As an elected agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits and investigations. Our audits are designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state, and local laws.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with state, federal and local laws on the part of all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits of state agencies and local governments as well as [fraud](#), state [whistleblower](#) and [citizen hotline](#) investigations.

The results of our work are widely distributed through a variety of reports, which are available on our [website](#) and through our free, electronic [subscription](#) service.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously, and provide training and technical assistance to governments, and have an extensive quality assurance program.

| <b>Contact information for the State Auditor's Office</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Public Records requests</b>                            | <a href="mailto:PublicRecords@sao.wa.gov">PublicRecords@sao.wa.gov</a> |
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