



OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

Suzanne M. Bump

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CONTACT:

Noah Futterman

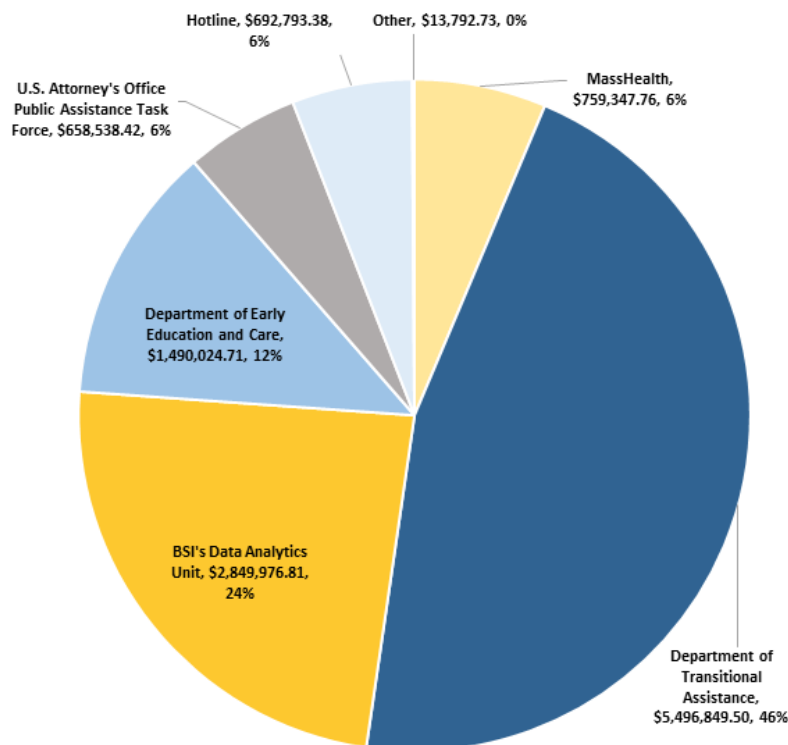
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Annual Report Highlights Trends in Public Benefit Fraud

Boston, MA – State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump today released the Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) annual report for her office’s Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI), which investigates allegations of public benefit fraud. In addition to noting that BSI identified \$11,961,323.31 in public assistance fraud during the year, it also highlights trends related to the office’s investigations.

During the year, Bump’s office identified \$11,961,321.31 in public benefit fraud, with nearly half, (\$5,496,849.50) of the identified fraud occurring in programs administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance. In total, BSI identified 1,077 cases of fraud in FY19. More than 40 percent of allegations of fraud investigated by Bump’s office involved individuals not reporting income they earned from employment.

FY19 Fraud Dollars Identified, by Public Benefit Program



In FY19, nearly half of the fraud identified by BSI was in programs administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance.



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“For many families, public benefit programs, such as SNAP and MassHealth, provide critical lifelines that allow them to put food on the table and access needed medical care. Unfortunately, bad actors seek to defraud these programs and the taxpayers of the Commonwealth by securing benefits for which they do not qualify,” Bump said. “The work of the Bureau of Special Investigations roots out these individuals and preserves public trust in these programs.”

As State Auditor, Bump has made it a priority to strengthen the integrity and accessibility of public assistance programs. Public benefit programs are designed to provide needed assistance to the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents. In addition to investigating allegations of public benefit fraud, Bump’s office recently released an [audit examining barriers individuals face when seeking to access benefits through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\) program](#).

The Office of the State Auditor’s Bureau of Special Investigations investigates allegations of public assistance fraud throughout the Commonwealth. Its work ensures taxpayer dollars are used effectively and that benefits are available to residents who truly need and qualify for them. BSI investigates programs administered by DTA, and the Division of Medical Assistance (which administers MassHealth). In addition, BSI has an agreement with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to investigate fraud in that program as well. BSI receives referrals for investigation from its agency partners, public tips, referrals from federal agencies, and through the use of its data analytics tools. The public can report potential fraud to BSI at: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/report-public-benefit-fraud>

The BSI Annual Report for FY19 is attached.

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About the Office of the State Auditor

The Office of the State Auditor conducts performance audits of state government’s programs, departments, agencies, authorities, contracts, and vendors. With its reports, the OSA issues recommendations to improve accountability, efficiency, and transparency. The OSA has identified approximately \$1.3 billion in unallowable, questionable, or potentially fraudulent spending and saving opportunities for the Commonwealth since 2011. Last year, auditees report implementation of 92 percent of the OSA’s audit recommendations.

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