



State Auditor
Julie Blaha

OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

E-Update

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1. Message from Auditor Blaha

I would like to quickly draw your attention to item #5 in this weeks E-Update. Our office has begun to receive questions about when the 2020 audit thresholds will become available – this information is based on data that the U.S. Department of Commerce publishes at the end of January each year. The OSA anticipates releasing the updated thresholds in early February 2021.

With Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. day upon us this coming Monday, the following quote from Dr. King feels particularly apt for both our remembrance of an incredible leader as well as a reflection on the current state of our country:

"Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred."

Thank you for all you do to hold our communities together. I am continuously grateful for your service.

2. TIF: Authorization for TIF Consultants to Access SAFES

All consultants and non-authority employees who need to access SAFES on behalf of a TIF authority must annually file an authorization form with the OSA. The authorization form for 2021 is available here (<https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=userAuthorizationForm>) and can be submitted by e-mail, fax, or US mail.

Please note that this form is not required for employees of TIF authorities. Authorization for employees of TIF authorities does not automatically expire. If an employee of a TIF authority does not have current access to SAFES and needs it, please contact our office at tif@osa.state.mn.us.

3. Update: Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group

The Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group held its last meeting of the season on January 12. The Working Group members conducted a final review and approval of draft legislation for introduction during the 2021 Legislative Session. In addition to some technical changes, the Working Group approved moving forward with:

- Changing how vesting is determined when relief associations elect to authorize combined service pension payments for firefighters with service in more than one fire department;
- Allowing relief associations with defined benefit plans to define a minimum length of time, of at least five years, during which service credit for nonvested members who have separated from firefighting service must be retained; and
- Clarifying language that defines when an audit is required, and when a relief association's financial reporting form must be certified by a certified public accountant.

We will keep relief association trustees updated on the progress of the Working Group legislation in our monthly Pension Division Newsletter and future Updates. Working Group meeting materials are available on the OSA website at:

<https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=reliefworkinggroup>

4. Reminder: Supplemental Benefit Reimbursement Form

Volunteer fire relief associations that wish to seek reimbursement of supplemental benefits paid during 2020 must complete the Supplemental Benefit Reimbursement Form posted on the Minnesota Department of Revenue (DOR)'s website. The form must be completed by February 15, 2021, to receive reimbursement in March 2021. The reimbursement form and instructions are available on the DOR website at:

<https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/supplemental-benefit-reimbursement-volunteer-firefighters-form-sbr>

5. Coming Soon: 2020 Audit Thresholds

The 2019 audit thresholds for certain cities, towns, and special districts, are currently available on the Office of the State Auditor (OSA)'s website here:

<https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=20160130.000>.

See Minn. Stat. § 412.02 and 412.591 (cities); 367.36 and 471.697 (towns); and 6.756 (special districts).

We anticipate that the OSA will be able to provide the 2020 audit thresholds in early February, 2021, based on the annual implicit price deflator for state and local expenditures that the U.S. Department of Commerce publishes at the end of January each year.

See also the February 7, 2020 E-Update for last year's notice:

<https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/other/eupdate/eupdate200207.pdf>.

6. Reminder: 2020 Law Enforcement Agency Asset Forfeiture Reporting

Please remember to report all forfeitures that were completed in 2020 to the Office of the State Auditor by February 5, 2021.

Reporting must be done using the online reporting tool available in the State Auditor's Form Entry System (SAFES) at: <https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/safes/>.

If your agency had no forfeitures completed in 2020, you will still need to login to SAFES and select the button labeled "I have no forfeitures in 2020 to report for this entity," by February 5, 2021. Please send any questions GID.OSA@osa.state.mn.us or call 651-297-3682.

7. Available: 2021 City and County Summary Budget Form

The 2021 City and County Summary Budget Form is now available through SAFES (State Auditors Form Entry System) at: <https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/SAFES/Default/Login>.

Minnesota law requires all Minnesota cities and counties to provide summary budget data to the Office of the State Auditor. Instructions for completing the form are available on our website at: <https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/forms/gid/instructionsforsummarybudgetdataform.pdf>.

We are asking all cities and counties to complete and submit the Budget Form by January 19, 2021. The earlier due date allows more time for analysis in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank you for your cooperation.

8. Released: CTAS 2021

The Small City and Town Accounting System update (CTAS 2021) was released this week and includes the 2021 Federal and State Tax Tables.

For existing CTAS users, CTAS 2021 can be downloaded, for no additional fee, from the State Auditor's Form Entry System (SAFES) webpage at:

<https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/SAFES/Default/Login>

For local governments that are not currently using CTAS and would like to purchase CTAS 2021, please print and mail in the CTAS Order Form on the OSA website at:

https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/other/ctas/docs/CTAS_Order_Form.pdf

CTAS 2021 includes updates in the Accounting, Payroll, Indebtedness, Investment, Reports and Admin Modules. Please see the CTAS webpage for additional information:

<https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=ctas>

9. Avoiding Pitfalls: First Meeting of the Year

Local government entities have specific responsibilities at the beginning of a new year.

At the first meeting of the year, city councils and county boards must designate the entity's official newspaper. City councils must also elect an acting mayor to assume the mayor's duties in the mayor's absence or if the mayor becomes disabled. County boards must elect a chair and a vice-chair, unless the county has adopted either the at-large chair or the elected executive plan.

This Avoiding Pitfall is available on our website here:

<https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=20090724.088>

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The Office of the State Auditor is located at **525 Park Street, Suite 500, Saint Paul, MN 55103**.

Phone: 651-296-2551 or 800-627-3529 (TTY) | **Fax:** 651-296-4755

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