



2017 Annual Report of the Auditor General of Ontario

The Auditor General will be releasing the Office's 2017 Annual Report on December 6, 2017. Below are brief descriptions of the value-for-money audits conducted by the Auditor General's Office this year.

Assessment Review Board and Ontario Municipal Board: The Assessment Review Board hears appeals mainly about residential and non-residential property assessments and classification. The Ontario Municipal Board hears appeals primarily related to land-use planning matters, such as amendments to municipalities' Official Plans and zoning bylaws, and minor variances. The audit assessed whether the Boards' resources for handling disputes are managed in an efficient and cost-effective manner, and whether accurate and complete data on the effectiveness of both Boards is collected, analyzed, and used to improve their operations.

Cancer Treatment Services: Cancer is the leading cause of death in Ontario, with more than 29,000 Ontarians estimated to have died of cancer in 2016, accounting for 30% of all deaths in the province that year. The audit assessed whether Cancer Care Ontario, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Ontario hospitals, has ensured that cancer treatments are provided in a timely, cost-efficient and equitable manner to meet Ontarians' needs in a cost-efficient manner.

Community Health Centres: Ontario's 75 Community Health Centres provide health care and community programs and services primarily to the homeless, seniors, refugees, new immigrants and low-income individuals. The audit assessed whether the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, in partnership with Local Health Integration Networks and CHCs, delivered programs and services through CHCs in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Emergency Management in Ontario: The focus of emergency management is on protecting lives, infrastructure, property and the environment, and helping to ensure the continuity of government operations and critical assets. The audit assessed whether selected ministries have effective emergency management programs in place in Ontario, and emergency management operations are carried out with due regard for economy and efficiency.

Farm Support Programs: Ontario's 49,600 farms cover 12.3 million acres and account for one-quarter of all farms in Canada. In 2016, Ontario's agricultural sector contributed \$4.4 billion to the provincial economy and employed almost 78,000 people. The audit assessed whether the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and Agricorp design and deliver farm-support programs efficiently and economically, in such a way that the programs support farmers in the management of their risks.

Independent Electricity System Operator—Market Oversight and Cybersecurity: The Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) operates the wholesale electricity market. This includes receiving competitive price offers from power generators and electricity importers to supply electricity to Ontarians. The audit assessed whether the IESO's and the Ontario Energy Board Market Surveillance Panel's oversight of electricity market participants is sufficient, and whether market participants operate in accordance with market rules. The audit also assessed the IESO's processes that ensure critical IT assets are protected so that the reliability of the grid is maintained.

Laboratory Services in the Health Sector: In 2015/16, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care spent about \$2 billion funding 260 million tests performed by laboratory service providers. The audit assessed whether the Ministry ensured that laboratory services are accessible to Ontarians; that accurate lab test results are provided to health-care professionals in a timely manner; and that lab services are safe and cost-effective.

Ministry Funding and Oversight of School Boards: The Ministry of Education funds 72 district school boards to provide elementary and secondary education to about two million students. In the 2016/17 school year, the Ministry and municipalities combined provided school boards with \$23 billion in operating funding. The audit reviewed whether the Ministry has effective oversight procedures to ensure that operating funds are used by the school boards in accordance with legislation, contractual agreements and Ministry policy, and are achieving the desired education outcomes.

Ontario Public Drug Programs: About four million Ontarians receive drug coverage through the Ontario Public Drug Programs each year. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is responsible for administering the Programs, which had a total expenditure of \$5.9 billion in the 2016/17 fiscal year. The audit assessed whether the Ministry had effective systems and procedures in place to ensure that recipients have timely access to up-to-date and cost-effective drugs and pharmacy services; payments to pharmacies and other dispensers are in accordance with legislation and agreements; and drug pricing and procurements in the public sector are reviewed to maximize cost savings.

Public Health: Chronic Disease Prevention: Public health works to prevent individuals from becoming sick by promoting healthy lifestyle behaviours and preventing the spread of diseases, including chronic diseases. This prevention is aimed at reducing the cost burden on the health-care system and improving population health. The audit assessed whether the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Boards of Health and Public Health Ontario effectively oversee, co-ordinate and deliver chronic disease prevention programs and services.

Real Estate Services: The Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation (Infrastructure Ontario) is a Crown agency under the Ministry of Infrastructure. Infrastructure Ontario manages a large portfolio of real estate owned and leased by Ontario Government ministries and some agencies. The audit reviewed whether Infrastructure Ontario has effectively ensured that real estate assets are acquired, managed, and disposed of with due regard for economy, and its Alternative Financing and Procurement arrangements support cost-effective management of maintenance of buildings in the public sector, such as hospitals.

School Boards' Management of Financial and Human Resources: School boards are responsible for promoting student achievement and well-being, and for effective stewardship of resources. In the 2016/17 school year, school boards received \$23 billion from the Ministry of Education. The audit assessed whether select Ontario district school boards in southern Ontario had effective systems and procedures in place to ensure that their use of operating funding from the Ministry complies with legislation, government directives and transfer payment funding arrangements and is achieving desired education outcomes. It also assessed whether resources are acquired with due regard for economy and are used efficiently.

Settlement and Integration Services for Newcomers: More than 510,000 immigrants settled in Ontario as permanent residents in the past five years. The federal government is the primary funder of services to help newcomers settle in this province, but the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration also has a mandate to settle and integrate newcomers. The audit reviewed whether newcomers receive effective settlement services from service providers, and whether the funding to service providers is based on the needs of those they serve and proportionate with the value of the services provided.

Social and Affordable Housing: Housing is considered affordable when shelter costs are no more than 30% of a household's total income before taxes. A variety of government programs have developed over many years to help low-income Ontarians attain housing within their means. The audit assessed whether the Ministry of Housing has effectively delivered social housing programs within its mandate, and has a strategy toward meeting its goal of ensuring that everyone in Ontario has an affordable home.

The 2017 Annual Report also includes:

- follow-up reports on our 2015 audits;
- a new section following up on audit recommendations made between 2012 and 2014;
- follow-up reports on recommendations in reports issued by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts;
- a chapter on the Public Accounts of the province;
- a chapter reviewing the quality of provincial agencies' and broader-public-sector organizations' public reporting on their activities through their annual reports; and
- our review of government advertising for the last fiscal year under the *Government Advertising Act, 2004*.