



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Annual Report Shows Need for Improved Transparency, and More Focus on Financial Sustainability and Service Delivery for Ontarians

(TORONTO) Value-for-money audits in the Auditor General's *2021 Annual Report* show that public organizations need to improve on both service delivery, and providing more accessible information to help Ontarians make more informed decisions, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said today after the Report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Financial accountability and governance were also themes this year.

Organizations and programs audited this year cover a wide range of areas, from health and social services to post-secondary education, land use planning, infrastructure, finance and technology; five provincial agencies were audited. Find more information on our audit topics at the end of this document.

Lysyk's Report this year also includes:

- an update on the ongoing Special Audit of Laurentian University, and
- a review of Internet Gaming in Ontario.

Additional chapters included each year are:

- a review of the Public Accounts of the province; the Auditor provided an unqualified opinion on the Public Accounts for the fourth year in a row,
- a review of government advertising; and
- follow-up reports on recommendations from previous Annual Reports and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Authority to Release Reports

The Auditor General's Annual Report is released each year before December 31 in accordance with the *Auditor General Act*. The Auditor General's *2021 Report of Environment Audits* was released on November 22, 2021 in accordance with the requirements of the *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993*. It included five value-for-money and two follow-up environment audits.

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Read the report at www.auditor.on.ca

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2021 Annual Report of the Auditor General of Ontario

Audit Topics

Assisted Living Services: The Ministry of Health sets policies and provides funding for assisted living services through Ontario Health. These publicly funded health-care services consist of home-based help, including personal support services, homemaking services and calls or visits to check on the client's health and safety.

Cardiac Disease and Stroke Treatment: CorHealth Ontario, established in 2016, is responsible for providing evidence-based guidance as well as monitoring and reporting on the performance of cardiac, stroke and vascular services in Ontario.

COVID-19 Economic Response and Supports for Businesses: Ontario's public health restrictions intended to curb the spread of COVID-19 required many businesses to temporarily close, operate at limited capacity, or implement public health measures. The province announced financial support to be distributed between the health-care sector and the economy.

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment Supply: Personal protective equipment (PPE) helps prevent exposure to infectious diseases or other hazards. PPE comprises wearable equipment such as gloves and masks. PPE was in short supply in Ontario at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial Reporting of School Boards in Ontario: The Ministry of Education is responsible for overseeing the financial health of Ontario's school boards and how they use their funding. The *Education Act* requires the boards' treasurers to prepare annual financial statements.

Homelessness: Each night, about 9,600 Ontarians experience "visible" homelessness such as living in shelters - about 90,000 Ontarians experience this type of homelessness in a year. It is estimated that as many as 80% of Ontario's homeless population experiences "hidden homelessness" such as couch surfing, sleeping in abandoned buildings or camping under bridges and in remote locations.

Inspection and Maintenance of the Province's Bridges and Culverts: The Ministry of Transportation is responsible for inspecting, maintaining and repairing approximately 3,000 bridges and 2,000 large culverts located on provincial highways and in northern areas of the province. Bridges must be inspected every two years using the Ontario Structure Inspection Manual.

Land-Use Planning in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: The province develops legislation, policies and plans that govern planning for private and municipal lands. Municipalities decide how lands within their jurisdiction are used, within what is allowed by provincial planning policies. Provincial land-use planning in the Greater Golden Horseshoe is intended to align with good land-use planning practices, the *Planning Act*, and the Growth Plan.

Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation: The Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation, which runs Ontario Cannabis Store, is a Crown agency that sells cannabis online and is the province's sole wholesaler of recreational cannabis to authorized retail stores. The OCRC's mandates to buy and sell cannabis and related products, and to promote the socially responsible use of cannabis.

Read the report at www.auditor.on.ca

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The Office of the Auditor General is an independent Office of the Legislative Assembly that conducts value-for-money and financial audits of the provincial government, its ministries and agencies. We also audit organizations in the broader public sector that receive provincial funding. Our vision is to deliver exceptional value and assurance to members of the Legislative Assembly, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and all Ontarians through high-quality work that promotes accountability, value for money and effective governance in the Ontario public sector.

Ontario Clean Water Agency: The Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA), a Crown agency reporting to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, provides drinking-water and wastewater treatment services to an estimated 4.5 million Ontarians. OCWA’s role is to fill gaps in the marketplace, especially for smaller, remote and First Nation communities where private operators are not willing to offer services.

Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council: The Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council (OMVIC) was created by the government of Ontario as a not-for-profit delegated authority to protect consumers and to maintain fair, honest and open competition for registered motor vehicle dealers.

Ontario Provincial Police: The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is one of the largest police forces in North America, with about 5,600 police officers and 2,500 civilian employees. The OPP provides policing services in areas of Ontario that do not have their own police force; patrols on provincial highways and waterways; policing services under contract to municipalities that have requested them; emergency and other support services; and investigations into complex criminal cases and organized crime.

Ontario Securities Commission: The Ontario Securities Commission (OSC) is a Crown corporation mandated to provide protection to investors from unfair, improper or fraudulent practices; foster fair, efficient and competitive capital markets and confidence in the capital markets; foster capital formation; and contribute to the stability of the financial system and the reduction of systemic risk.

Ontario’s Provincial Comptrollership Framework: The Office of the Comptroller General provides leadership and transparency in provincial financial reporting, financial management policy and enterprise risk management, and oversees the Ontario Internal Audit Division’s day-to-day operations. The Office of the Comptroller General has a centralized finance function, called the Office of the Provincial Controller Division.

Outpatient Surgeries: Outpatient surgery, sometimes referred to as “day surgery” or “ambulatory surgery,” is typically surgery in which a patient spends less than 24 hours in hospital before going home. The Ministry of Health funds public and private hospitals, and independent health facilities, to provide surgeries.

Private Career Colleges Oversight: About 500 private career colleges in Ontario train adults who require specific job skills or who already possess academic qualifications but want to enhance their practical skills to become more competitive in the job market. They currently enrol about 159,000 learners.

Public Colleges Oversight: The Ministry of Colleges and Universities is responsible for the oversight of Ontario’s 24 public colleges. Public colleges provide career-oriented education and training to help students gain employment, meet the needs of employers, and support the social and economic development of communities.

5G Network Technology and 5G Pre-Commercial Program: In 2017, the province partnered with the federal government, the province of Quebec and three multinational technology companies to build and operate several 5G test platforms. The 5G mobile network, which is not yet operating commercially in Canada, will enable new services and technology that rely on real-time data-sharing, including smart energy products and smart health-care services.

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