

§ 159-34. Annual independent audit; rules and regulations.

(a) Each unit of local government and public authority shall have its accounts audited as soon as possible after the close of each fiscal year by a certified public accountant or by an accountant certified by the Commission as qualified to audit local government accounts. When specified by the secretary, the audit shall evaluate the performance of a unit of local government or public authority with regard to compliance with all applicable federal and State agency regulations. This audit, combined with the audit of financial accounts, shall be deemed to be the single audit described by the "Federal Single Audit Act of 1984". The auditor shall be selected by and shall report directly to the governing board. The audit contract or agreement shall (i) be in writing, (ii) include the entire entity in the scope of the audit, except that an audit for purposes other than the annual audit required by this section should include an accurate description of the scope of the audit, (iii) require that a typewritten or printed report on the audit be prepared as set forth herein, (iv) include all of its terms and conditions, and (v) be submitted to the secretary for his approval as to form, terms, conditions, and compliance with the rules of the Commission. As a minimum, the required report shall include the financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, all disclosures in the public interest required by law, and the auditor's opinion and comments relating to financial statements. The audit shall be performed in conformity with generally accepted auditing standards. The finance officer shall file a copy of the audit report with the secretary, and shall submit all bills or claims for audit fees and costs to the secretary for his approval. Before giving his approval the secretary shall determine that the audit and audit report substantially conform to the requirements of this section. It shall be unlawful for any unit of local government or public authority to pay or permit the payment of such bills or claims without this approval. Each officer and employee of the local government or local public authority having custody of public money or responsibility for keeping records of public financial or fiscal affairs shall produce all books and records requested by the auditor and shall divulge such information relating to fiscal affairs as he may request. If any member of a governing board or any other public officer or employee shall conceal, falsify, or refuse to deliver or divulge any books, records, or information, with an attempt thereby to mislead the auditor or impede or interfere with the audit, he is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(b) The Local Government Commission has authority to issue rules and regulations for the purpose of improving the quality of auditing and the quality and comparability of reporting pursuant to this section or any similar section of the General Statutes. The rules and regulations may consider the needs of the public for adequate information and the performance that the auditor has demonstrated in the past, and may be varied according to the size, purpose or function of the unit, or any other criteria reasonably related to the purpose or substance of the rules or regulation.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except for Article 5A of Chapter 147 of the General Statutes pertaining to the State Auditor, all State departments and agencies shall rely upon the single audit accepted by the secretary as the basis for compliance with applicable federal and State regulations. All State departments and agencies which provide funds to local governments and public authorities shall provide the Commission with documents that the Commission finds are in the prescribed format describing standards of compliance and suggested audit procedures sufficient to give adequate direction to independent auditors retained by local governments and public authorities to conduct a single audit as required by this section. The secretary shall be responsible for the annual distribution of all such standards of compliance and suggested audit procedures proposed by State departments and agencies and any amendments thereto. Further, the Commission with the cooperation of all affected State departments and agencies shall be responsible for the following:

- (1) Procedures for the timely distribution of compliance standards developed by State departments and agencies, reviewed and approved by the Commission to auditors retained by local governments and public authorities.
- (2) Procedures for the distribution of single audits for local governments and public authorities such that they are available to all State departments and agencies which provide funds to local units.
- (3) The acceptance of single audits on behalf of all State departments and agencies; provided that, the secretary may subsequently revoke such acceptance for cause, whereupon affected State departments and agencies shall no longer rely upon such audit as the basis for compliance with applicable federal and State regulations. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1975, c. 514, s. 15; 1979, c. 402, s. 9; 1981, c. 685, ss. 8, 9; 1987, c. 287; 1993, c. 257, s. 20; c. 539, s. 1081; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2001-160, s. 1.)