

OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE
KEITH FABER



Partnering for Performance

MARCH 2026

AMANDA CURRAN, SENIOR MANAGER, LOCAL
GOVERNMENT CHANNEL

Agenda

Who We Are

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What We Do

How do Performance Audits Work?

Questions To Improve Your Own Performance

Receiving a Performance Audit



Who We Are and
What We Do



Who We Are: Our Team

- The Ohio Performance Team (OPT) is made up of professionals from diverse backgrounds.
- Our team has a blend of government/public sector and industry/private sector backgrounds.
- OPT has in-depth experience in research, operations, data analysis, and management.



What We Do

Client-Paid
Performance
Audits

Fiscal Distress
Performance
Audits

Audits in the
Public Interest

Feasibility
Studies

Special
Research
Projects

What is a Performance Audit?

Provide elected officials and government employees with an objective, third-party analysis of their operations to help them:

**Improve
Performance**

**Reduce
Costs**

**Make
Informed,
Data-Driven
Decisions**



Performance Audit Principles:

The principles guiding performance auditing are often called the “Three E’s”:

ECONOMY

Keeping the costs low

EFFICIENCY

Getting the most out of available resources

EFFECTIVENESS

Achieving the objectives or goals of the program

Key Standards and Practices



Integrity - Providing independent assurance on success claimed by government



Accountability - Helping to hold the executive to account for its performance



Transparency - By publishing new information, we can shine a light on how public resources are used



New insights - Applying analytical techniques that have not yet been used by government; Sharing best practices from Ohio and nationwide; Offering insight based on experience of auditing similar activities in other departments.



Making practical recommendations - Including recommendations in performance audit reports that enable the audited entity to improve its performance



Clarifying complexity - Providing an easy-to-digest summary of complex topics

Key Points about Performance Audits



Performance audits are collaborative.

They require the participation of the organization being audited.



Common performance audit areas include program results/operations, staffing, compensation, contract management, and facility, fleet, and asset use.



Performance audits adhere to government auditing standards.



Cost for an audit varies based on depth and breadth of work performed.

The Auditor of State's office works for taxpayers and keeps audit costs low.



How Do Performance Audits Work?



Performance Audit Phases

Planning

- Development of the audit plan, which includes objectives or questions to answer with the audit
- Clarification of budget and timeline

Fieldwork

- Development of analyses and conclusions
- Detailed work conducted to deliver on the audit plan

Reporting

- Development of the written report

Performance Audit Phases

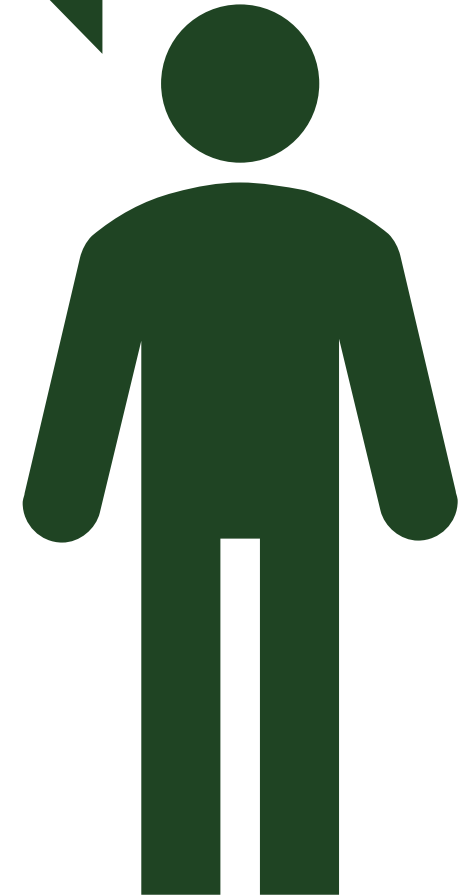
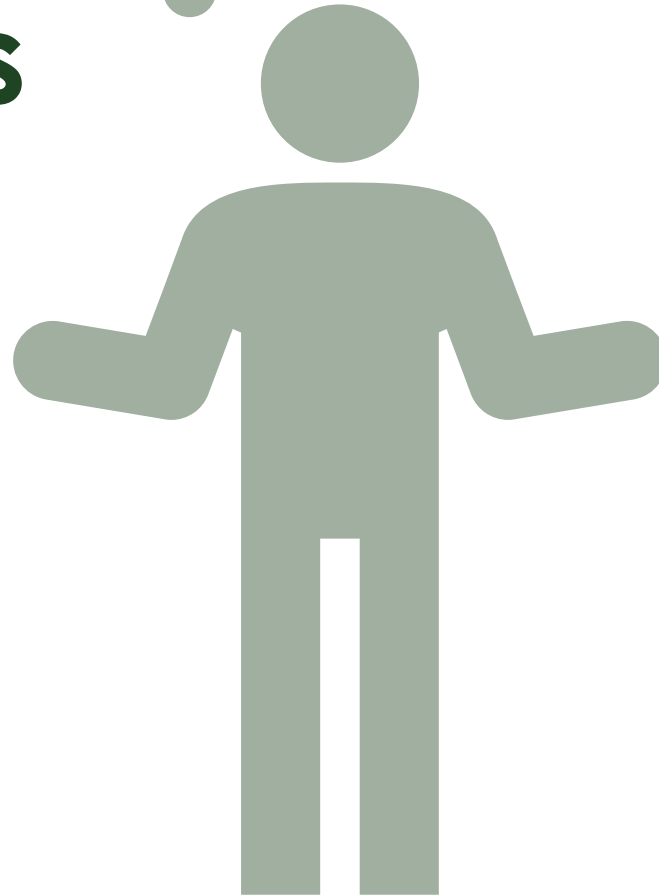


Planning

Fieldwork

Reporting

**Planning:
What questions
do you have
about your
operations?**



Performance Audit Questions

How can we cut costs or increase revenue?

How does our fleet compare?

How many people do we need in _____ department?

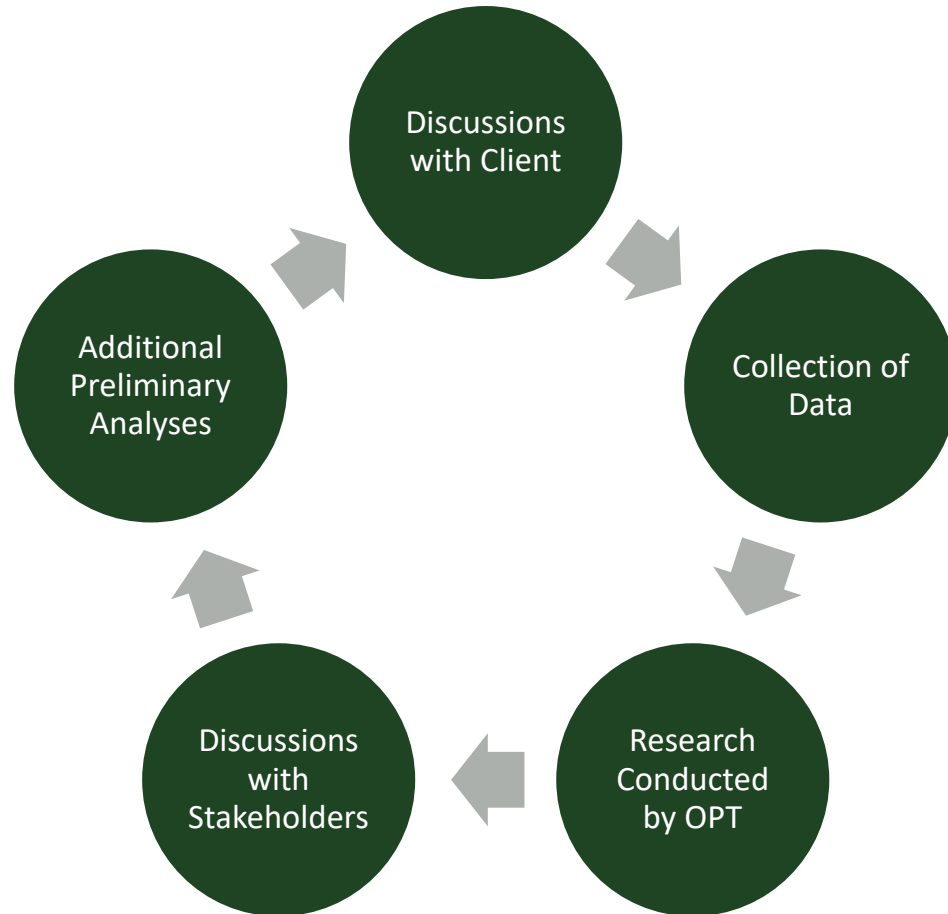
We are struggling to attract and retain staff; what can we do?

We have been operating the same way forever, is there a better way to do things?

How are other entities operating their _____ department?

How do our CBAs compare?

Planning Process



Development
of Objectives
and Audit Plan

Examples of Performance Audit Objectives

Are staffing levels appropriate when considering peer staffing levels and/or demand for services?	Is the financial condition appropriate compared to peers and/or best practices?	Are the Fire Department's operations appropriate in comparison to peers, industry standards, and/or the Township's financial condition?
Are salaries and wages appropriate in comparison to other government entities within the local market?	Is the County's process for financial planning efficient and effective compared to industry standards and/or best practices?	How does the Township's contract management efforts compare to best practices, and are the contracts cost-effective?
Are benefits costs appropriate in comparison to other government entities within the local market?	Are the Village's strategic and capital planning practices consistent with leading practices?	Are the City's strategic and capital planning practices consistent with leading practices?
Are the Fire Department's staffing levels appropriate in comparison to peers, industry standards, and/or the Township's financial condition?	Are the City's collective bargaining agreement provisions appropriate in comparison to local peers, minimums requirements, and the City's financial condition?	Do the Library's expected revenues and expenditures indicate future financial sustainability?

Performance Audit Phases

Planning

Fieldwork

Reporting

Fieldwork: Conducting Performance Audit Analyses

Condition

- Current situation that exists

Criteria

- Desired state or expectation

Cause

- Reason for variation between condition and criteria

Effect

- Impact on operations

Ways to Answer Objectives: Peers & Criteria

Peer Benchmarks

Local Peers

- Geographically adjacent (in most cases)
- Used for local labor market comparisons

Primary Peers

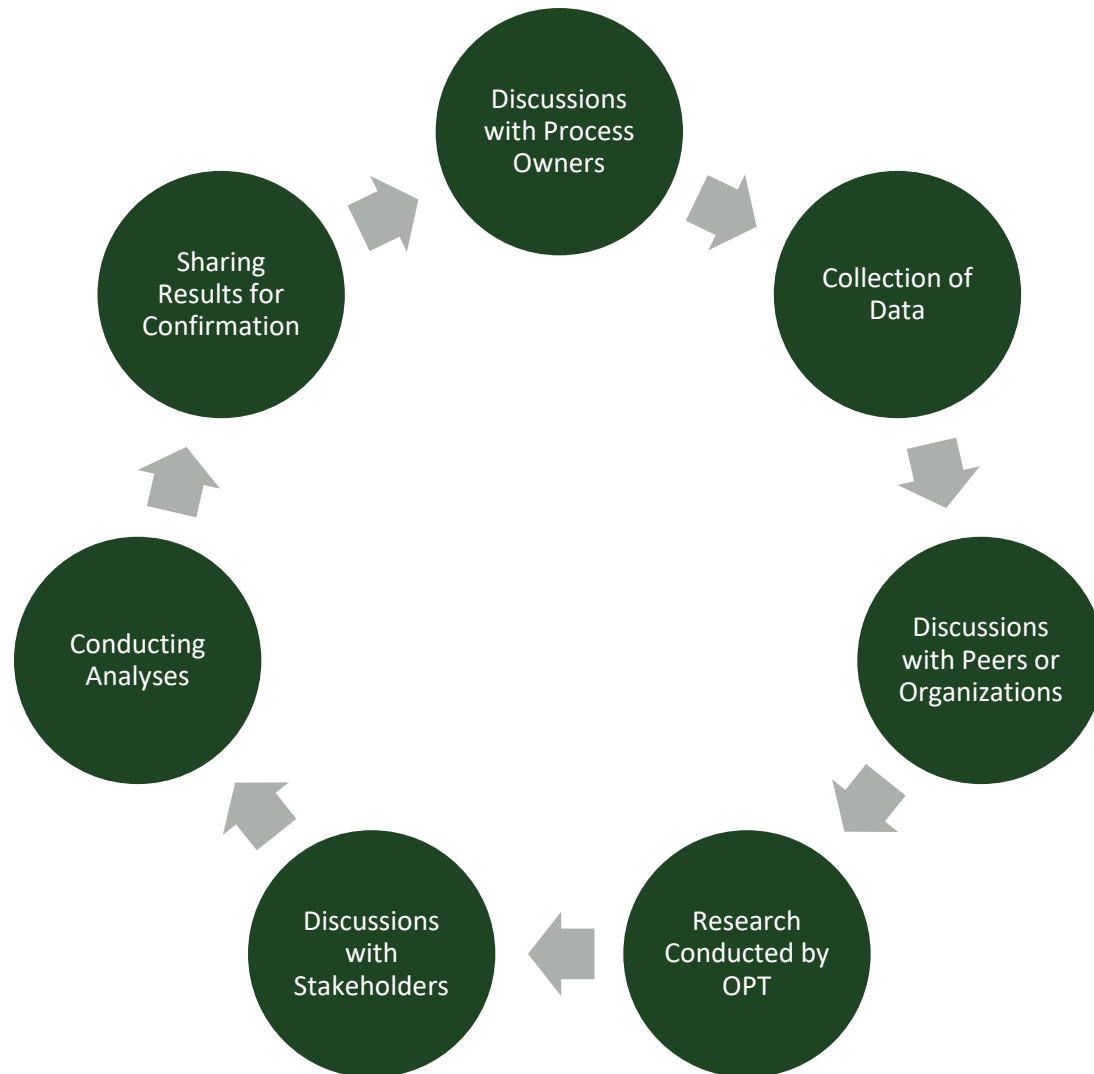
- Identified by relevant metrics

Best Practices/Standards

Criteria used for certain analyses where they exist

- Examples: planning, budgeting, fleet, or statewide metrics

Conducting Analyses in Fieldwork



Development of Recommendations

Building Recommendations

1. Financial Implications

Wherever OPT can be reasonably assured of a financial savings that can be calculated for an objective that asks a question related to efficiency, a financial impact will be calculated

2. Policy/Process- No Financial Implication

Recommendations that cannot be reasonably calculated (ex: certain CBA provisions), still made but no financial implication is indicated in report.

3. Other Considerations

Issues for Further Study

Noting items that may come up during the course of the audit but may be out of scope for the project

Key Observations

Sometimes we may note important facts that do not lead to any particular recommendation but should be noted for transparency purposes.

Performance Audit Phases

Planning

Fieldwork

Reporting

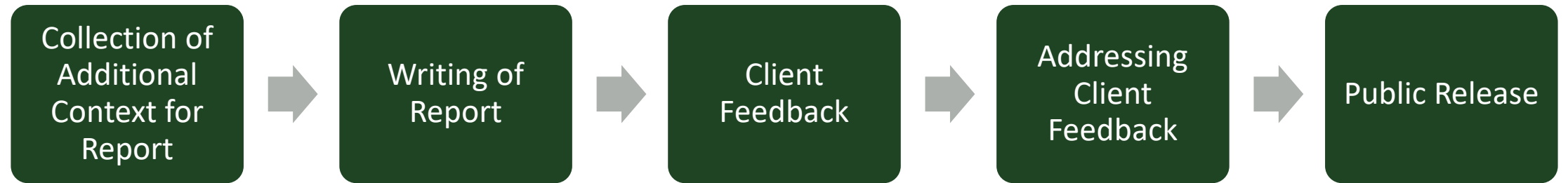
What's in our Reports?

- Everything a constituent would need to understand our recommendations and the context around them

Examples:

- Organizational Background
- Financial Background
- Background on Objectives
- Recommendations
- Client's Response

Reporting Process





Questions to Improve Your Own Performance



Think Like a Performance Analyst



**Thinking Boldly
About the
Future**



**Doing More
with Less**



**Data vs
Information**



Benchmarking



**Hearing the
Voice of the
Customer**

Before you can improve, you need to know how to answer the right questions...

Doing More with Less

How are you currently using your resources?

How are your resources going to change in the future?

Do you know the impact of your programs?

Could any resources be redirected from program areas with less impact to program areas with greater impact?

Data vs. Information

What data are you collecting?

What data could you collect?

Are you using your data to manage programs, or is it just collecting dust in an old spreadsheet?

Benchmarking

Are you tracking performance over time?

Are you comparing performance now to prior performance?

Do you know why performance is changing over time?

Are you comparing performance to best practices or other entities?

Do you know why performance varies from best practices or other entities?

Hearing the Voice of the Customer

How are you communicating with stakeholders?

How are you ensuring stakeholders can communicate with you?

How are you evaluating the quality of service provided to your “customers”?



Receiving a Performance Audit



Don't Know the Answers? Consider a Performance Audit

Analysis Completed by OPT

- You provide inputs, we do the rest

Criteria Sourced for You

- We contact peers and other entities to source data

Independent, Third-Party Report

- Builds trust with your stakeholders

How Can You Get a Performance Audit?

Contact Amanda

Discuss Potential
Questions to
Answer, Timeline,
and Budget

Sign Notice of
Engagement

Participate in the
Performance
Audit Process



Questions?

Amanda Curran

Senior Performance Project Manager
Local Government

amcurran@ohioauditor.gov

<https://ohioauditor.gov/performance.html>