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State Comptroller releases follow-up audits of state agency and Warren County municipality

Both entities have made progress since initial Comptroller audit

A Warren County municipality that needed to strengthen its procurement practices and a state agency that was dispensing grants without a proper review have both made significant improvements since being the subject of earlier audits by the Office of the State Comptroller.

State Comptroller Matthew Boxer said follow-up audits conducted at Washington Borough and the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, or GCADA, reveal progress has been made in implementing the corrective action plans for each entity, though more work still needs to be done.

"For us, the release of an initial audit is just the first step in an ongoing monitoring process," Boxer said. "We're encouraged by the remedial steps that have been taken at these two entities, but we're not entirely satisfied. Both entities have committed to resolving the remaining issues, as required by law. Our office will continue to follow-up until all of the problems we identified have been fixed."

The Comptroller's Office released its initial audit of Washington Borough on May 6, 2009. Less than six weeks later, the Borough adopted a revision of its purchasing policies and procedures, installing greater safeguards for purchases and expenditures. The Borough also reallocated and relocated its staff to better accommodate its needs. Its oversight and management of contracts improved as well with the institution of a more professional and aggressive review and monitoring process.

In the Borough's response to the follow-up audit, the Borough manager thanked the Office of the State Comptroller and said the information provided in the audit "will be a beneficial tool for all municipalities to refer to."

A follow-up to a December 2008 audit of GCADA's operating practices showed improvement in the way the state agency has handled both its grant management and the management of its personnel. Since the audit, GCADA has required recipients of more than \$10,000 in funding to implement evidence-based programs and measure their effectiveness. The agency also has begun conducting all of the required site reviews and has made those reviews more extensive by examining grant reimbursements and supporting documentation.

The initial audit of GCADA found the agency was overstaffed and some of its employees had little or no work to do. It also found seven of the agency's 12 employees, including management, had exceeded their annual allotment of sick days without adequate documentation. Since the audit, GCADA has revised the job descriptions of its employees and reorganized and redirected its staff, which has been reduced from 12 employees to nine. The state agency also has begun conducting evaluations of all its employees and is tracking sick leave usage to identify potential abuse.