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State Audit Finds Administrative Courts Has Improved Operations, But Could Do More

DENVER—The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) issued its performance audit of the Office of Administrative Courts (OAC), within the Department of Personnel & Administration. Overall, auditors concluded that OAC had strengthened its operations and services in recent years but could do more to improve aspects of its case management, customer service, and administration.

OAC administers Colorado’s centralized, executive branch administrative court system that was created to provide accessible, independent, and cost-effective adjudication of disputes related to government programs and services. In Calendar Year 2023, OAC opened 9,274 cases, completed 1,592 hearings, and served more than 50 state agencies and other entities. Most cases related to workers’ compensation or Medicaid, which were the focus of the audit.

The audit noted that OAC generally provided timely hearings to parties in cases. For example, 96 percent of workers’ compensation hearings were completed by statutory deadlines, which was an improvement since the OAC’s last audit in 2012. Medicaid cases were less timely, with between 63 percent and 76 percent of cases meeting OAC’s internal timeliness goals. Auditors reported that OAC could continue to strengthen its case management, monitoring, and goals in order to serve parties more timely.

In addition, auditors found that OAC could improve its website information, hearing guidance, and methods for gathering feedback from parties. “State agencies and stakeholders told us that they were generally satisfied with OAC’s customer service, but some suggested that more communication would be helpful,” said Legislative Audit Manager, Jenny Page.

The audit also found that OAC's administrative practices had improved since 2012, in part, due to its use of a new case management system. Auditors recommended that OAC continue to enhance the quality of its case data, as well as its virtual hearing processes and guidance for Administrative Law Judges on how to apply judicial standards for potential conflicts of interest.

The State Auditor's report made a total of 12 recommendations to OAC's management to strengthen case timeliness and aspects of its customer service and administration.

The full report is available @ www.colorado.gov/auditor.

About the Office of the State Auditor

Under the direction of State Auditor Kerri L. Hunter, the OSA's nonpartisan, professional staff promote government accountability by conducting independent performance, financial, and IT audits and evaluations of State departments, agencies, institutions of higher education, special purpose authorities, and tax expenditures (e.g., credits, exemptions, deductions). The OSA also tracks over 5,000 Colorado local governments for compliance with the Local Government Audit Law, and operates a statewide fraud reporting hotline.

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