



Tim Keller
State Auditor

State of New Mexico
OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR
Elected for Better Government

For Immediate Release
Wednesday, January 14, 2015

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Auditor Keller Announces Major New Initiatives

SANTA FE, NM – Today, State Auditor Tim Keller announced two key components of his vision for the Office of the State Auditor. That vision includes engaging more proactively in government accountability and policy evaluation while continuing existing efforts to fight fraud, waste, and abuse.

“I will work hard to provide government accountability and to address the root causes of financial misuse that hold our state back. To this end, we are creating a Government Accountability Office within the Office of the State Auditor and developing an annual financial health scoring system to track audit findings and progress toward improvements,” Keller stated.

- *The new Government Accountability Office (GAO)* will assess whether tax dollars are distributed equitably and effectively under the law. This means verifying that any type of earmarked funding for education and healthcare is spent on the programs for which they were intended, for example:
 - Title II funding to Native Americans, Title IX funding to women, Hispanic Education Act dollars to the classroom, and capital outlay dollars to the projects they are designated to fund.
 - The GAO will educate the public and propose solutions for the \$900 million dollars in unspent fund balances sitting on the sidelines in state government; measure out-of-state contract spending and work to ensure that local businesses are given a fair shot at government contracts; and proactively assess the return on investment for our state’s many tax-incentive programs.

Ruby Ann Esquibel will be joining the Office of the State Auditor on Monday to serve as the Government Accountability Officer. Ms. Esquibel brings over 25 years of experience to this role, having most recently served as Principal Analyst with the Legislative Finance Committee.

- *Annual Financial Health Scoring and Accountability.* The State Auditor will develop an annual financial health report card for all public entities to track audit findings and progress toward improvements each year. This initiative will make it easier for the public to learn where problems exist and how the State Auditor ensures that problems are addressed by public governments. Over the next year, the Office of the State Auditor will be integrating the public, governments, policymakers, and independent auditors (IPAs) to take annual corrective actions to help remedy and prevent fraud, waste and abuse.

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