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Ensuring Economical Printing for State Agencies

Program background

In 2011, the State Auditor's Office completed a performance audit on the Department of Printing's Printing Services. The audit found that overall Washington was using relatively few of the effective tactics that other states employed to hold down costs. The report recommended that specific actions be taken to lower state printing costs, such as:

- Allow private print companies and the Department to compete for all jobs
- Consolidate agency print shops with the Department of Printing
- Adopt statewide cost-containment strategies, specifically managed print

Auditors estimated potential cost savings of between \$5 million and \$13.6 million annually after full implementation of the recommendations.

Later in 2011, the Legislature passed a bill consolidating the Department of Printing with several other agencies and creating a new agency, the Department of Enterprise Services (DES). This law also made several changes to state printing policies and partially addressed our recommendations. These changes included:

- State agencies are no longer required to use state printing services, but must include DES in any bid solicitations for print jobs
- State agencies are required to consult with DES regarding economic and efficient options for printing jobs
- DES must broker print management contracts for state agencies and issue guidelines for how state agencies should manage their print jobs

Even with these changes, there may still be opportunities to lower printing costs statewide. For example, while DES guidelines now require state agencies to use strategies that track, manage and reduce their printing costs, some remain unaware of this requirement or how to meet it.

Furthermore, while DES currently outsources about 30 percent of printing jobs, there has not been an in-depth, independent review of its process for evaluating projects and deciding whether in-house or outsourced services are the most cost-effective and efficient option for its customers.

The audit will seek to answer the following questions:

1. Have any agencies consolidated their printing services with DES?
2. Does the competitive bidding process at DES ensure economic and efficient printing for state agencies? If not, why not?
3. Is DES promoting print management strategies across all state agencies?

Timing

We estimate audit results will be released in November 2016.

April 2016