



OFFICE OF THE  
STATE AUDITOR

**News Release**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Utah's State Privacy Officer Identifies Compliance Gaps in online Privacy Policy Statements**

*Governmental entities are required by Statute to  
Post and Implement Privacy Policies with Key Elements*

**Salt Lake City, UTAH –**

The Office of the State Auditor today announces that the State Privacy Officer (SPO) has completed the first comprehensive compliance review of over 1600 Utah governmental entities and governmental non-profits and their compliance with statute governing privacy protections and policies.

The review examined over 1600 governmental entities for statutory compliance with Utah Code 63D-2-103 which requires each government entity to establish a clear Privacy Policy Statement and post that statement on its website.

The review showed that 66% of the reviewed entities currently fail to meet all the necessary criteria specified in statute. These governmental entities range from counties and cities to school districts, charter schools, and water districts, which, between them, serve all the residents of Utah.

Establishing, and abiding by, an effective Privacy Policy Statement is an essential element of protecting the personal data of Utah residents. Statute specifies that the privacy policy must outline the types of personal data (PII) collected by the entity, the measures implemented for its protection, as well as providing contact information for privacy inquiries and outlining the sharing and retention practices the governmental entity adheres to.

In response to these findings, the State Privacy Officer is working with non-compliant entities to help bring them into compliance. The State Privacy Officer will conduct future reviews to measure compliance. The goal is to strengthen the protection of personal data and to foster greater accountability within Utah's government services.

State Privacy Officer Dr. Whitney Phillips commented, "The role of the State Privacy Officer is to help ensure that Utah governmental entities safeguard the private information of Utah residents. I am pleased that our team's leadership was able to establish this baseline on compliance with statute and we are committed to help improve these results."

State Auditor John Dougall remarked, “I am pleased that we are helping improve the privacy posture of Utah’s governmental entities to protect Utahns and their personal information and to ensure these entities comply with statute designed to give citizens greater control of their personal data.”

A copy of the Review report can be viewed on the Office’s website at [auditor.utah.gov](http://auditor.utah.gov), or directly at <https://reporting.auditor.utah.gov/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=015Do0000017XEAI2>.

A link to the Privacy Policy Statement Template for Entities can be found at:

<https://auditor.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2024/01/Privacy-Policy-Statement-Template-1.pdf>.

A link to the Governmental Website Privacy Notice Checklist can be found at:

<https://auditor.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2024/01/Governmental-Website-Privacy-Notice-Checklist-1.pdf>.

Additional information about the State Privacy Officer and Privacy related activities can be found on the Office’s website at [auditor.utah.gov/privacy](http://auditor.utah.gov/privacy). For additional details on the compliance review and future steps, please contact Dr. Whitney Phillips, the State Privacy Officer at [wphilips@utah.gov](mailto:wphilips@utah.gov)

### **About the Office of the State Auditor**

The Office of the State Auditor provides Utah taxpayers and government officials with an independent assessment of financial operation, statutory compliance, and performance management for state and local government.

Specific activities of the Office include performing financial audits, conducting Federal funds compliance audits, providing local government oversight, conducting agency and program performance audits, performing fraud and compliance audits, and operating the State Auditor Hotline for citizens to report suspected financial issues or improprieties. These capabilities strengthen Utah State Government and help taxpayers have confidence in the integrity of Utah’s government agencies.

The Office also provides interactive graphical tools to help taxpayers and policymakers gain greater insight into governmental financial activities. These tools include the Transparent Utah Public Finance website ([transparent.utah.gov](http://transparent.utah.gov)) as well as the award-winning Project KIDS public education analysis dashboards ([auditor.utah.gov/kids](http://auditor.utah.gov/kids)).

The State Auditor is a Constitutional Officer of the State of Utah, elected directly by the state’s citizens every four years. The role of the State Auditor is authorized in Article VII, Section 15 of the Utah Constitution. For more information, see [auditor.utah.gov](http://auditor.utah.gov).

The State Privacy Officer focuses on strengthening the privacy practices of governmental entities, like cities, counties, school districts, and colleges and universities, and is tasked in statute with focusing on government care of personal information to reduce the risk to individual privacy. The State Privacy Officer position was created during the 2021 Utah General Legislative Session.

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