

OVERVIEW

Review of Revolving Funds, Trust Funds, and Trust Accounts of the Departments of Human Resources Development, Labor and Industrial Relations, Public Safety, and Taxation

Report No. 07-07, October 2007

Summary

Section 23-12, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, requires the State Auditor to review all existing revolving and trust funds every five years. The review is to include a five-year financial summary for each fund or account, an evaluation of the original intent and purpose of each fund or account, and a determination of the degree to which each fund or account achieves its stated and claimed purpose. The reviews are scheduled so that the funds administered by each state department will be reviewed once every five years. This is our third review of the revolving and trust funds and trust accounts of the Departments of Human Resources Development, Labor and Industrial Relations, Public Safety, and Taxation.

Revolving funds are often established with an appropriation of seed money from the general fund. Revolving funds must demonstrate the capacity to be self-sustaining. Activities financed by revolving funds include loan programs that are initially established by general fund seed moneys and then replenished through the repayment of loans. *Trust funds* invoke a fiduciary responsibility of state government to care for and use the assets held for the benefit of those with a vested interest in the assets. A pension fund is an example of a trust fund. *Trust accounts* are typically separate holding or clearing accounts for state agencies. A trust account is often used as an accounting device to credit or charge agencies or projects for payroll or other costs.

Of the 32 funds and accounts we reviewed this year, 5 were revolving funds, 11 were trust funds, and 16 were trust accounts. We used criteria developed by the Legislature as well as criteria developed by our office from a review of public finance and accounting literature. These funds must continue to serve the purpose for which they were created and not require continuing general fund appropriations. In addition, a revolving fund must reflect a linkage between benefits sought and charges made upon users and also be an appropriate financial mechanism for the program or operation. A trust fund must also meet the statutory definition of a trust fund. For each fund, we present a five-year financial summary, the purpose of the fund, and conclusions about its use. We do not present any conclusions about the effectiveness of the program, its management, or whether the program should be continued.

Responses

We transmitted a draft of this review to the Departments of Human Resources Development, Labor and Industrial Relations, Public Safety, and Taxation.



The Departments of Public Safety and Taxation were in general agreement in their exit conferences and did not submit responses.

The Department of Human Resources Development agreed with our review of its funds.

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations generally agreed with most of our review of its funds. However, the department disagreed with our conclusion that unneeded fund balances be transferred from the Special Fund for Disability Benefits to the general fund. We continue to point out that that \$8.9 million fund balance is far in excess of the approximately \$62,000 it needs for average annual expenses.

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