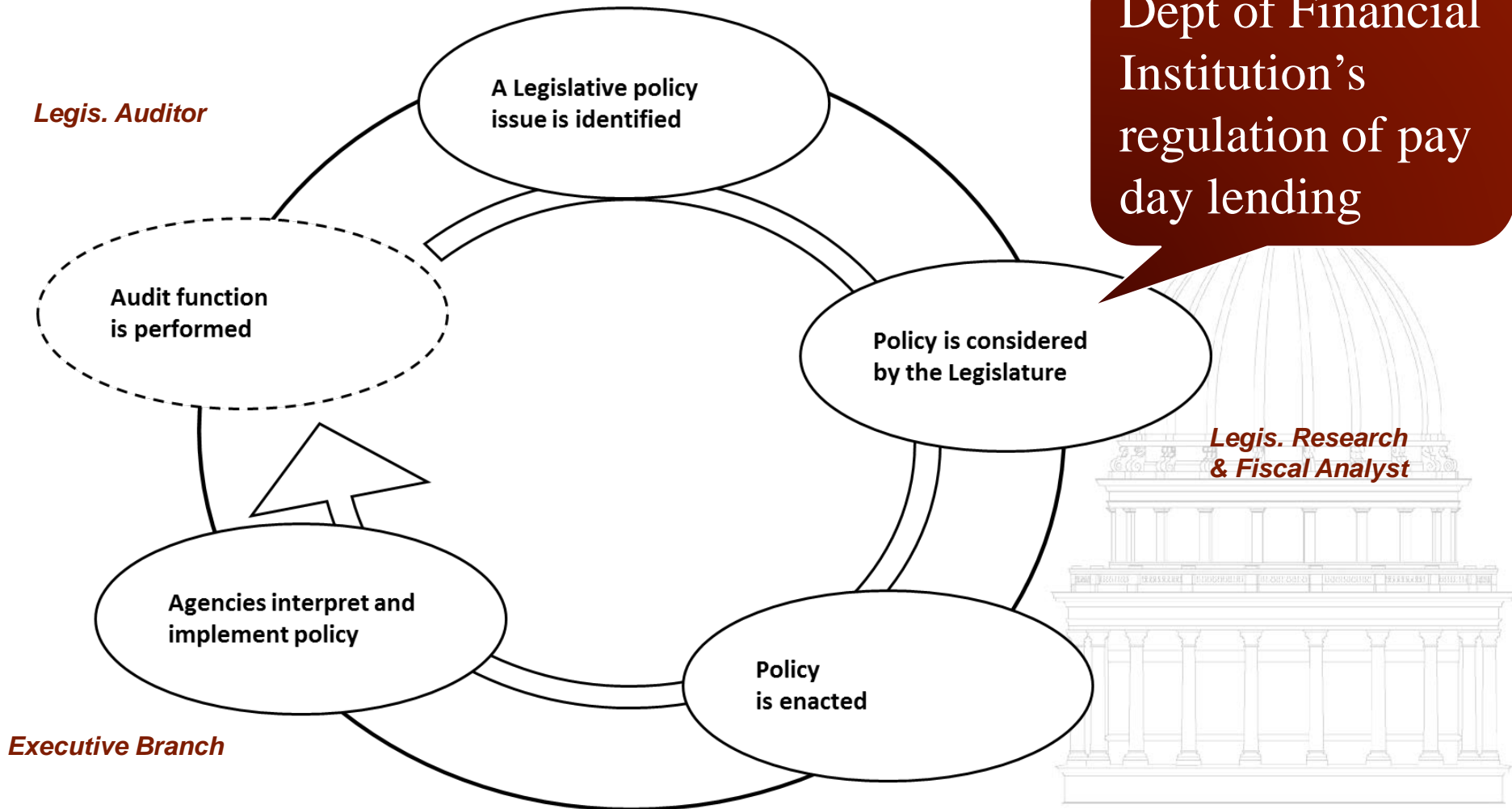


“Closing The Policy Circle”



Four Most Common Pitfalls Made by State Agencies

- 1) **Poor Oversight: Lack of governance and/or inadequate organizational structure**
- 2) **Policy and procedure failures and/or lack of strategic planning**
- 3) **Lack of performance standards and measures**
- 4) **Weak data and/or data collection problems**

The Utah Office of the Legislative Auditor General examined 134 of our issued recommendations from 2001-2004 and found that over 70% of the recommendations came from one or more of the above causes.

Best Practices & Performance Notes

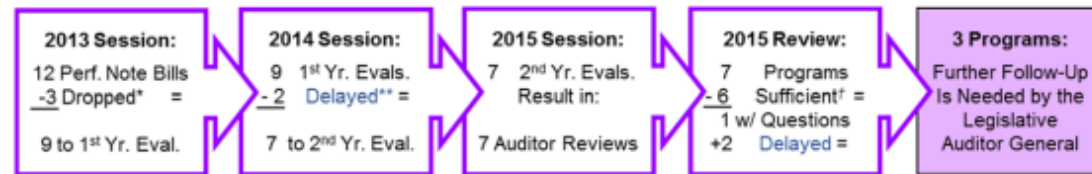
This is another way that the Legislature infuses oversight into the process and keeps us involved in “Closing the Policy Circle.”

The Auditor General has statutory responsibility to review all new government programs (programs that have received a performance note required by legislative rule) and provide the new program (or agency) with information on management best practices. Since 2000, the Auditor General has published *Best Practices for Good Management* (found at www.le.utah.gov/audit/BP_2009.pdf) as a guide for new programs.

In 2011, the Legislature implemented a legislative rule requiring some bills to include performance notes that identify program goals, objectives, outcomes, and performance measures. The Auditor General is charged with reviewing such programs according to program self-evaluations and the performance note contents. The best practices and performance note processes mesh well and are pursued in tandem.

■ New Programs with Performance Notes Enter Two-Year Review Process

This is the second report on our review of programs that completed the two-year self-evaluation and performance note follow-up process. Last year's progress report indicated that we were following 12 new 2013 programs. The flowchart below summarizes the work conducted for the 2013 new programs, ending with three programs needing additional follow-up, as will be discussed in the two sections following the chart



* *Dropped: Not a program or insufficient risk level to merit further work*

** *Delayed: One program's self-evaluations are delayed a year because legislation provided for a one-year pilot program; One program's final review by OLAG delayed by a change in USOE's student assessment system*

† *Sufficient: Auditor opinion is there was sufficient program documentation/progress under Best Practices & Performance Note parameters*

■ One 2013 Program with Questions Is Recommended for Limited Scope Audit

After reviewing the evaluations submitted by program directors, OLAG will recommend that one program be referred to the Legislative Audit Subcommittee to consider for limited scope audit work.

• **House Bill 139: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Action Center** has been funded with \$30 million in state funds over two years, plus an estimated \$1.5 to \$2.6 million in private cash and in-kind contributions. In addition to the two self-evaluation surveys, we reviewed financial information and an external evaluator's reports as well as presentations to legislative committees. Of considerable import is the STEM Action Center's inability to provide meaningful outcome or effectiveness data for its various projects. The external evaluator's effectiveness analyses were inconclusive, citing late implementations, insufficient student assessment data (SAGE), and low usage or participation among obstacles to the analyses of all reviewed projects. In addition, incomplete data on FINET reports make it difficult to compare budgeted amounts with actual expenditures. A further concern is the lack of accountability for private donations, which are held by a private foundation. We believe a more detailed review can provide better information on STEM operations and output, increase overall accountability, and identify the program's level of effectiveness at this point in its operations.

Oversight Through Follow-up

Individual involvement?

- In addition to the Lead and Review legislative committees, individual legislators can sponsor items still needing attention.

■ 2017-17: An In-depth Follow-up of Projections of Utah's Water Needs

One portion of our audit reported that local water systems have expressed growing interest to improve their efficiency. One way to accomplish this goal is to identify and address the system leaks and other unaccounted uses. With the assistance of government agencies, some water systems have utilized a water audit to identify the chief sources of unaccounted water use, especially leaks, and have taken steps to reduce unaccounted flows. This water audit could benefit all municipal systems.

Action Needed: The Legislature should consider prioritizing an interim study evaluating the benefit of mandatory water audits of unaccounted for water use in municipal water systems. Unaccounted for uses include leaks within a municipality's system and addressing these issues can make systems more efficient stewards of the water resources they oversee.

■ 2017-13: A Performance Audit of the Division of Family Health and Preparedness

One portion of this audit found that the Baby Watch Early Intervention Program can improve both monitoring and data utilization.

Action Needed: The Legislature should consider statutory changes to require background checks for Baby Watch Early Intervention providers.

■ 2017-12: A Performance Audit of the History of Selected Public Education Programs

One part of this audit found that after the Utah State Board of Education used combined appropriations

entirely for language Dual Immersion, the funds for the Critical Languages program were depleted and ceased operations in 2014. However, Critical Languages still exists in statute, without funding.

Action Needed: The Legislature should review the intent of the Critical Languages Program and determine whether to terminate the program or keep it in statute.

■ 2017-01: A Performance Audit of Utah's Monetary Bail System

Our audit found that pretrial release decisions are made without adequate information, such as defendant risk. We recommended that the Administrative Office of the Courts work towards the adoption of an evidence-based risk assessment instrument. We also reviewed the surety bond forfeiture process and found opportunities for improvement. Specifically, the forfeiture process could be shortened and streamlined to better promote court appearances.

Action Needed: The Legislature should consider changes to the surety bond forfeiture process found in Chapter IV:

- Reducing the statutory timeframes for processing forfeitures;
- Requiring all forfeiture notifications to be processed via certified electronic mail; and
- Working with the Courts to design a forfeiture process that improves court appearances and reduces automatic bond exonerations.

