

FY23

# Annual Report



# Letter from the Comptroller



Dear Baltimore,

This has been a year of continued major transition and progress for the Office of the Comptroller. If you've followed my team's work since we took office in 2020, you know that we've invested tremendous energy and focus on transparency, modernization and accountability. These efforts have promoted a culture shift and implemented administrative changes in our own office and with our colleagues across agencies.

In Fiscal Year 2023 we absorbed the management of Accounts Payable and now oversee all payments for third-party vendors and contractors. This transition was approved by the voters in the 2022 general election. Since the transition, we have been working closely with city agencies to improve their internal processes and reduce vendor payment turnaround time. Once invoices are submitted and fully approved, AP now issues a check for payment or an electronic fund transfer within 24 hours.

This year we also launched BOESubmit, a new digital portal for submission of transactions requiring Board of Estimates (BOE) approval. Modernization and enhanced transparency of Board processes are primary goals of my first term in office. BOESubmit transformed an archaic, manual paper-driven process into a transparent, efficient, accessible online platform.

The Department of Audits, the Municipal Post Office, the Department of Real Estate, the Department of Telecommunications, and our Board of Estimates Operations team are performing at peak levels, providing key city services and constituent support. You can read more about our departments' achievements for fiscal year 2023 in this report.

We've achieved so much in three short years, but we have every intention of kicking it up another notch. Here's what the Comptroller's Office is focused on in 2024:

**BOESubmit Public Portal:** Our office recently completed digitalizing over 10 years of Board of Estimates contracts. This year we expect to launch BOESubmit's public-facing portal, which will allow anyone the ability to review a decade's worth of contracts online.

**Open Checkbook:** With the transition of Accounts Payable to the Comptroller's Office, we are now focused on updating Open Checkbook where a registry of City payments will be visible and searchable. We will achieve this in close collaboration with Baltimore City Information & Technology with a goal of having all third-party public transactions online and available for public review by the spring of 2024.

Department of Finance: Across the U.S., the office of the Comptroller traditionally serves as a municipality's Chief Financial Officer, overseeing fiscal duties like city payroll and tax collection. That was true in Baltimore too, until the 1960s when the City Charter was rewritten to move all monetary responsibilities under the Mayor's Office. It's time to go back to the future. In 2024 I will be introducing a Charter Amendment to restore the Department of Finance under the management of the Office of the Comptroller, providing the enhanced transparency and oversight owed to our constituents.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to making Baltimore City government more modern, accessible, and accountable every day.

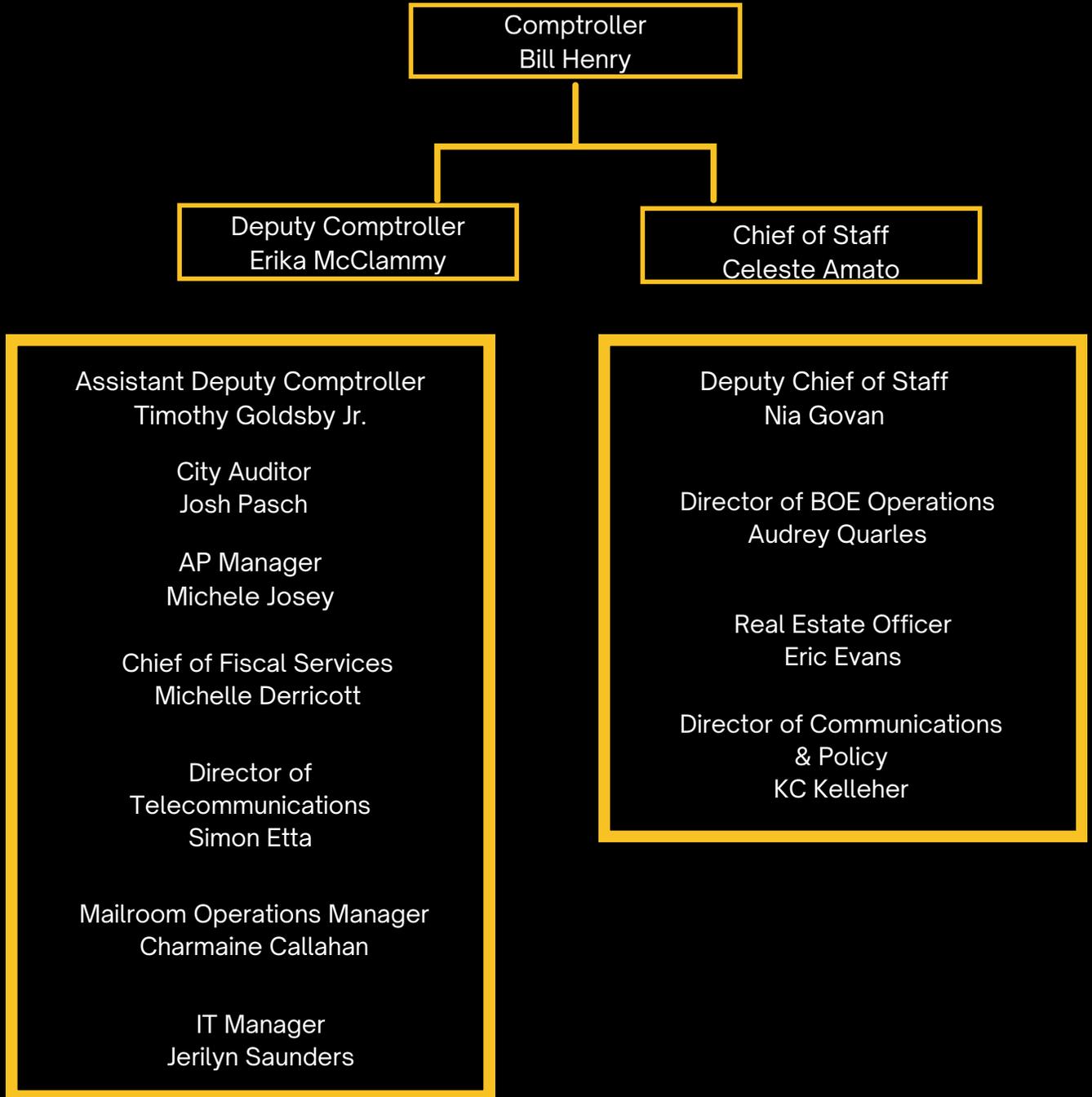
These continue to be exciting times in the Office of the Comptroller. And, we are here to help!

Thank you for your support!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Henry", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bill Henry, Baltimore City Comptroller  
January 2024

# Our Organization



# Our Budget

Fund	2023 Budget	2023 Positions	2024 Budget	2024 Positions
General	\$9,297,196	67	\$11,166,642	77
Internal	\$13,949,556	31	\$14,950,386	33
Total	\$23,246,752	98	\$26,117,028	110

The budget for the Comptroller's Office is supported by two funding sources: general funds and internal service funds.

The general fund is a central repository fund for most of the City's tax and unrestricted revenues, and from this fund most City operations are budgeted along with pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) capital projects. The Internal service fund directs funds from agency budgets to finance goods or services provided by central service agencies such as Telecommunications and the Municipal Post Office.

## Year to Year changes

The FY23 budget included \$450,000 in general funds for the development and ongoing implementation of BOESubmit, the Board of Estimates automation project. It also eliminated the debt service obligation for the Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone system - paid off ahead of schedule.

The FY24 approved budget reflects transferring Accounts Payable (AP) from the Finance Department to the Comptroller's Office as required by a November 2022 voter approved Charter amendment. This budget item also includes funding to increase AP staffing and software upgrades.

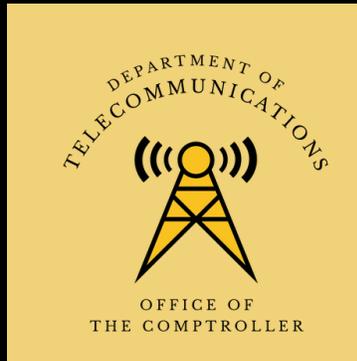
## Performance Measures

The FY22 Annual Report for the Office of the Comptroller included proposed performance measures for FY23.

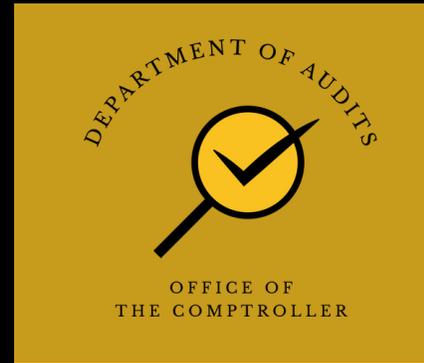
The FY24 budget, approved by the Mayor and City Council, includes performance measures for all operations under the Office of the Comptroller and can be found on the Bureau of the Budget Management Research's website: [bbmr.baltimorecity.gov/budget-publications](http://bbmr.baltimorecity.gov/budget-publications).

Here is a snapshot of what we are looking to accomplish:

Department	Measure	Goal
Accounts Payable	# of days to pay invoices after agency approval	1
Audits	% of recommendations implemented by agencies (calendar year)	70%
Real Estate	# of Tax Sale Certificates sold	130
Municipal Post Office	% of undocumented mail pieces submitted to the USPS	0%
Telecommunications	% of help desk tickets resolved in 10 business days	90%



# Our Departments



# Accounts Payable

## Mission

The mission of Accounts Payable (AP) is to improve the internal and external customer experience by increasing transparency, accountability and communication in the service of agency business ensuring efficient, accurate and timely payments to vendors, contractors, and other City business partners.

## Background

As of January 22, 2023, Accounts Payable (AP) and its staff officially joined the Office of the Comptroller. The newly established Department of Accounts Payable is responsible for all payments and disbursements made by the City except for payroll and debt management. AP processes an average of 3,423 vendor invoices each month.<sup>[1]</sup> All vendor invoices are now processed within 24 hours of receiving all approvals in the Workday financial system. The AP team is and will continue to work closely with agency fiscal officers to ensure timely vendor payment.

## Accomplishments

AP's full implementation of Workday, the new enterprise application now used by the City of Baltimore for financial management and human resources, has improved overall customer experience, transparency, and accountability in the City's vendor payment process and allowed AP to process payments to customers more efficiently and quickly. AP completed a comprehensive review of Workday functionalities, workflows, and policies to ensure efficient use and support of the City's new financial system as well as enabling AP to act as a training partner supporting agency efforts to clear internal vendor payment backlogs and enact prompt processing of new invoices. AP continues to provide customer service support to City agencies, suppliers, and vendors. As the Comptroller stated, "a top performing AP department, with a strong focus on customer service, is critical to effective government."

# Audits

## Mission

The mission of the Department of Audits (DOA) is to provide objective and independent value-added services and oversight to continuously improve audit quality, techniques, and processes that support a more efficient, effective, transparent, and accountable City government.

## Background

The Department of Audits (DOA) conducts biennial performance and financial audits, including the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Single Audit; provides attestation engagements and advisory services as requested by various management; investigates allegations of fraud, waste, and abuses of city resources; reviews various contracts, change orders, or proposals submitted by agencies to the Board of Estimates; and other special projects as necessary.

The DOA, pursuant to Article V § 11, performs scheduled biennial audits of agencies. In 2023, this included: the Baltimore Fire Department (BCFD), Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC), Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Baltimore City Information Technology (BCIT), Mayor's Office of Children & Family Success (MOCFS), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of General Services (DGS), and Department of Public Works (DPW).

## Accomplishments

In 2022, the DOA completed its first peer review in a decade. Supporting the department's continuous improvement goal, the peer review resulted in updates of internal policies, procedures, and practices including an improved internal quality control system to increase audit quality and work paper documentation in FY23. Audit quality has also been reinforced through on-the-job training. To further support the development of our audit team, we added training with governmental auditing conferences which allowed our staff to learn what other governmental auditors are experiencing and how they address auditing challenges in the current environment. In addition, our team continues their collaboration with other agencies to improve the efficiency of the Pre-Audits' review process.

# Real Estate

## Mission

The mission of the Department of Real Estate (DoRE) is to optimize value for the City in all real property transactions including leasing, licensing, acquisition, surplus and disposition. This is accomplished by a team of responsive and experienced real estate agents and ongoing investment in technologies and systems to enhance accountability and transparency in all processes.

## Background

The DoRE Team:

- Works collaboratively with internal City departments and external real estate customers and partners and is responsible for the negotiation of real property transactions.
- Consults with City departments regarding real estate needs for City-owned and privately owned leasing transactions.
- Works with City agencies to establish and manage Requests for Proposals involving selling or acquiring real property.
- Maintains a database of the City's real estate assets.
- Maintains a repository of unsold tax certificates after each annual tax sale.
- Strives to increasingly automate workflows for greater efficiency and productivity.

## Accomplishments

DoRE has invested in technology to enhance transparency and accountability. In 2023 DoRE began implementation of Slate software to streamline acquisition and leasing processes and create a more user-friendly interface, improving communication and coordination between agencies and reducing staff time required. DoRE is continuing this work by implementing the Visual Lease software, a comprehensive database of all leasing transactions that allows for efficient tracking and analyzing of crucial leasing information.

DoRE launched an evaluation of its Vendor Lean sale certification process for ways to improve efficiency and its effectiveness at eliminating blight in Baltimore City.

# Telecommunications

## Mission

The mission of the Department of Telecommunications is to support Baltimore City with modern, efficient, and innovative service and products.

## Background

The Department of Telecommunications provides telephone services to all City agencies, including managing Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone service; supplying mobile phones; providing technical support, installation, and maintenance for various City call centers such as 311, Department of Public Works (DPW), and Revenue Collection; and providing for the billing of these services with external vendors. This service is funded by user charges through an Internal Service Fund.

## Accomplishments

As part of its annual business review, The Department of Telecommunications met with City agencies to analyze their telecommunication assets, and review opportunities for growth, efficiencies, and cost reduction. The Department conducted equipment audits by evaluating City agency telecommunication infrastructure, applications, usage, contracts, and operational processes. As part of a no usage audit of City agencies, The Department evaluated carrier usage statistics for wireless devices, Voice over internet protocols (VoIP), phone lines, analog lines, and circuits. They also examined vendor contracts and accounts for billing discrepancies. The total telecommunication cost reductions from these audits amounted to approximately \$719,503 in savings to the City. With these savings from reductions in carrier bills and equipment audits, the Department made an early payment on a loan the City took out in 2018 to upgrade its phone system to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). This early payment and renegotiated terms of the loan saved the City an additional \$488,000 in interest.

# Municipal Post Office

## Mission

The mission of the Municipal Post Office (MPO) is to serve as a full-service mail house and handle all mail for the City of Baltimore. MPO processes all incoming and outgoing US mail as well as parcels, packages, and interdepartmental mail for City agencies and related locations housing City services.

## Background

The Municipal Post Office (MPO) manages the City's mail by operating interagency mail service and serving as an intermediary with the United States Postal Service for all mail coming to and from City agencies. The MPO provides City agencies with external mail services for parking tickets, tax bills, and water bills. This service is funded by user charges through an Internal Service Fund.

## Accomplishments

In FY23 MPO focused on innovation implementing significant upgrades in equipment and technology. MPO, like all departments and services under the Comptroller, does their part to advance transparency and accountability. This year MPO hosted an open house for city employees, United States Post Office (USPS) workers, and members of the Greater Baltimore Postal Customer Council (GBPCC), to showcase newly installed, upgraded mailing equipment, and to expand attendee understanding of MPO services, capabilities and the mailing facility. MPO added further value to that engagement by asking the USPS-GBPCC Passport Office to set up shop and assist open house attendees with filing out passport applications and renewals. The response from attendees was overwhelmingly positive.

# Board of Estimates Operations

## Mission

The Board of Estimates (BOE), pursuant to the Charter of Baltimore City, Article VI Section 2, formulates and executes the fiscal policy of the City, awards contracts and provides oversight of expenditures greater than \$25,000. BOE Operations is a small team of staff responsible for the administrative management of all aspects of policy, process, scheduling and permanent record retention on behalf of the Board and its members.

## Background

The Baltimore City Board of Estimates (BOE) consists of five voting members: The Mayor, the President of the City Council, the Comptroller, the City Solicitor, and the Director of Public Works. The President of the City Council serves as President of the Board of Estimates, and the City Comptroller serves as Secretary to the Board.

## Accomplishments

In December 2022, BOE Operations launched a customized workflow software, BOESubmit, to standardize and streamline all board-related document processes and retention. BOESubmit digitized the board memo and submission process for all City agencies, creating one-stop access for reviewing departments including budgets and audits, automated production of the public agenda, and retention of record documents on behalf of the Board. The system eliminated paper and manual processes and in early 2024 will become a highly searchable and accessible document retention system of Board actions for all agencies. This functionality will also support enhanced public access to Board documents resulting in less staff time spent on administrative tasks and responses, and even more focus on the in-depth review of board actions and fiscal oversight.

# Our People

Our dedicated team celebrated the following service years in FY23:

## 5 years

Michael Williams, Central Office

## 10 years

Bernard Akrofi, Audits  
William Brown, Telecommunications  
Austin Groom, Audits

## 15 years

Ahmed Munye, Audits  
Bernice Diamond, Accounts Payable

## 20 years

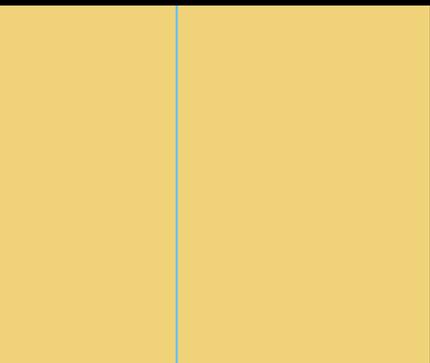
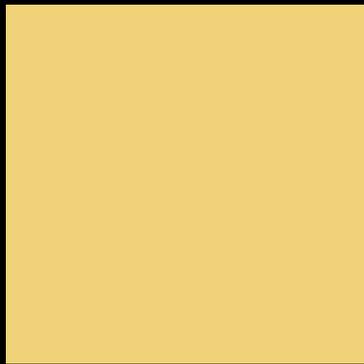
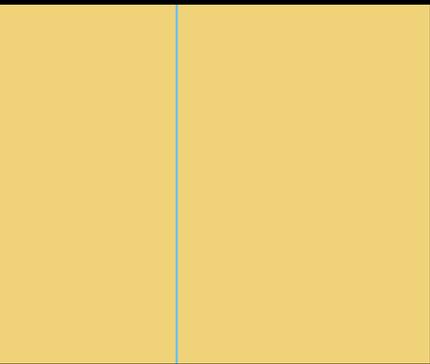
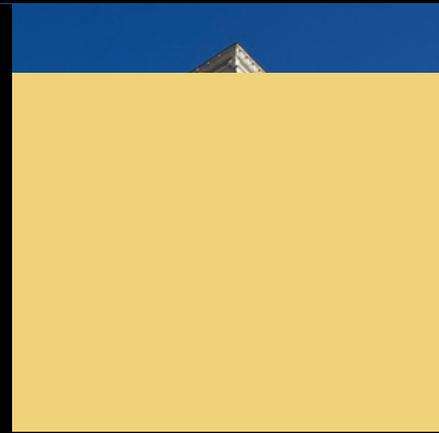
Simon Etta, Telecommunications

## 35 years

Juliet Handy, Audits

A heartfelt thank you to the dedicated employees who have spent many years in service to bettering Baltimore City!





# Thank You

Grateful to Baltimore City for the opportunity to serve.

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 [comptroller.baltimorecity.gov](http://comptroller.baltimorecity.gov)