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# PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

 Auditor General Tim DeFoor  PaAuditorGen  PaAuditorGen  www.paauditor.gov



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## News for Immediate Release

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### **Auditor General DeFoor: New Audit Urges Stronger Safeguards to Prevent Sexual Harassment and Abuse at Temple University**

**HARRISBURG** – Auditor General Timothy L. DeFoor today encouraged Temple University in Philadelphia to strengthen its background check procedures and resume sexual harassment prevention training for employees, based on the findings of an audit by his department.

“Universities must work to ensure a safe environment for everyone who comes onto campus,” DeFoor said, “While our audit did not find any instances of abuse or harassment taking place, strengthening background checks and sexual harassment training will help build a stronger and safer campus community.”

The [audit](#), which covered the period of July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019, focused on three main areas: background checks, sexual harassment training and the school’s capital improvement plan.

DeFoor said Pennsylvania’s Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) requires that any employee who has direct contact with minors must undergo certain background check clearances. This requirement also applies to people working for youth programs held by or at universities.

The audit found that Temple University:

- Failed to ensure that all youth program workers received CPSL background clearances timely and that the clearances were maintained for all workers in its internal youth programs;
- Failed to ensure that CPSL background clearances for all new employees were obtained in a timely manner;
- Did not complete required criminal/civil background checks for certain employees in accordance with its procedures; and
- Did not require and complete a CPSL or criminal/civil background check for nearly 9,600, or 83 percent, of its newly hired employees.

DeFoor said while state law does not require background checks for all newly hired employees of universities, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) and Penn State University require some form of background screening for every new employee.

The audit offers 11 recommendations to help improve background check policies and procedures at Temple, as well as a recommendation for the General Assembly to consider strengthening the Child Protective Services Law as it applies to universities.

In the area of sexual harassment prevention, the audit noted that Temple failed to design and implement adequate oversight to ensure all new employees received the required training on preventing and addressing sexual harassment. In 2018, the school discontinued its ongoing training program and replaced it with a mere annual policy acknowledgment via its online employee portal.

“Auditors found that Temple’s policy against sexual harassment was comprehensive, but the university lacked the oversight needed to ensure the policy was both consistently followed and effective,” DeFoor said. “In addition, discontinuing its ongoing prevention training may have led employees to feel that the issue was not important to the university.”

The audit contains seven recommendations to strengthen sexual harassment prevention training procedures, including returning to an interactive training program conducted in-person or online.

Regarding the university’s capital improvement plan, auditors found that Temple’s decision-making process to assess the need for capital improvements is not adequately documented in a formal written policy. However, the decision-making process itself appears to be aligned with best practices. The audit offers two recommendations in that area.

Review the [Temple University audit report](#) and learn more about the Department of the Auditor General online at [www.PaAuditor.gov](http://www.PaAuditor.gov).

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