

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

---

## Sheriff

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania  
For the Period  
March 1, 2018 to February 28, 2023

---

August 2024



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018  
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General  
Twitter: @PAAuditorGen  
www.PaAuditor.gov**

**TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR  
AUDITOR GENERAL**

The Honorable Christopher R. Leppler  
Sheriff  
Lancaster County  
Lancaster, PA 17608

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Sheriff, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (County Officer), for the period March 1, 2018 to February 28, 2023, pursuant to the requirements of Section 401(e) of *The Fiscal Code*, 72 P.S. § 401(e).

The objective of the audit was to determine whether all moneys collected on behalf of the Commonwealth have been correctly assessed, reported, and promptly remitted and to provide a report to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Pennsylvania State Police. Our audit was limited to areas related to the objective identified above and was not conducted, nor was it required to be, in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

The County Officer is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance of compliance with state laws and regulations applicable to the collection of moneys on behalf of the Commonwealth, including whether they have been correctly assessed, reported, and promptly remitted. The County Officer is also responsible for complying with those laws and regulations. It is our responsibility to perform procedures to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

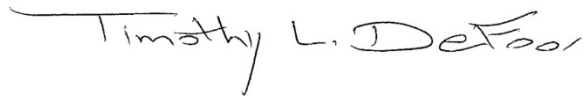
Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, for the period March 1, 2018 to February 28, 2023, the County Officer, in all significant respects, complied with state laws and regulations applicable to the collection of moneys on behalf of the Commonwealth, including whether they have been correctly assessed, reported, and promptly remitted, except as noted in the findings listed below and discussed later in this report:

- Inadequate Outstanding Check Procedures.
- Commonwealths Portion Of Revenue Was Not Transmitted Timely.

This report includes summaries of the County Officer's receipts and disbursements of funds collected on behalf of the Commonwealth (summaries). We obtained data representing the County Officer's receipts and disbursements from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Pennsylvania State Police, which obtains data from each of the Commonwealth's sheriff offices and used the data to create the summary. We also evaluated the accuracy of the data as part of our audit to conclude on the County Officer's compliance with certain state laws and regulations as described in the previous paragraph. Any adjustments that we considered necessary based on our audit work are disclosed in the *Audit Adjustments* line of the summaries; however, the scope of our audit does not include the issuance of an opinion on the accuracy of the amounts reported in the summaries.

The purpose of this report is to determine whether all moneys collected on behalf of the Commonwealth have been correctly assessed, reported, and promptly remitted. This report is not suitable for any other purposes.

The contents of this report were discussed with the County Officer's management. We appreciate the courtesy extended to us by the Lancaster County Sheriff during the course of our audit. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Bureau of County Audits at 717-787-1363.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy L. DeFoor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the start of the name.

Timothy L. DeFoor  
Auditor General  
August 6, 2024

# CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Background.....	1
Summaries Of Receipts And Disbursements:	
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency .....	3
Pennsylvania State Police.....	4
Findings And Recommendations:	
Finding No. 1 - Inadequate Outstanding Check Procedures .....	5
Finding No. 2 - Commonwealth's Portion Of Revenue Was Not Transmitted Timely .....	6
Report Distribution .....	8

SHERIFF  
LANCASTER COUNTY  
BACKGROUND  
FOR THE PERIOD  
MARCH 1, 2018 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2023

The Department of Auditor General is mandated by Article IV, Section 401 (e) of *The Fiscal Code* (Act of April 9, 1929, P.L.343, No. 176), to audit the accounts of each county officer to determine whether all moneys collected on behalf of the Commonwealth have been correctly assessed, reported, and promptly remitted.

Sheriff receipts consist of monies collected on behalf of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Pennsylvania State Police. These include monies collected for the following surcharges and fees:

- Deputy Sheriff’s Education and Training Surcharges of \$10 on each fee collected by the sheriff of every county upon acceptance for each service required for any complaint, summons, writ, or other legal paper required to be served or posted by the sheriff. In January 2021 the fee increased to \$16, in January 2022 the fee increased to \$18, and in January 2023 the fee increased to \$20.
- Firearms License Validation System Account Fees of \$1 imposed for applying for a license to carry a firearm. Effective March 1, 2015, this fee is remitted to the Pennsylvania State Police as required by Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act.

Total disbursements for the audit period are comprised as follows:

Sheriff checks issued to:

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency	<u>\$ 291,774</u>
Pennsylvania State Police	<u>\$48,335</u>

This balance reflects a summary of receipts and disbursements on behalf of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Pennsylvania State Police. It does not reflect adjustments disclosed by our audit.

Christopher R. Leppler served as Sheriff during the period March 1, 2018 to February 28, 2023.

The summaries of receipts and disbursements provides a summary of receipts and disbursements by category. The categories and the amounts of surcharges and fees assessed are based on Pennsylvania laws and regulations.

SHERIFF  
LANCASTER COUNTY  
BACKGROUND  
FOR THE PERIOD  
MARCH 1, 2018 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2023

The summaries were prepared in accordance with reporting requirements prescribed by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Pennsylvania State Police. Under this method, only the Commonwealth portion of cash receipts and disbursements are presented, revenues are recognized when received, and expenditures are recognized when paid.

Audit Adjustment - Pennsylvania State Police Summary

The \$5,105 adjustment represents a supplemental payment transmitted to Pennsylvania State Police on February 23, 2023.

SHERIFF  
LANCASTER COUNTY  
PENNSLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY  
SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS  
FOR THE PERIOD  
MARCH 1, 2018 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2023

Receipts:	
Deputy Sheriff's Training and Education Surcharges	\$ 291,774
Disbursements to Commission on Crime and Delinquency	<u>(291,774)</u>
Balance due Offices (County)	-
Audit adjustments	<u>-</u>
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) for the period March 1, 2018 to February 28, 2023	<u><u>\$ -</u></u>

SHERIFF  
LANCASTER COUNTY  
PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE  
SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS  
FOR THE PERIOD  
MARCH 1, 2018 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2023

Receipts:

Firearms License Validation System Account Fees	\$ 58,854
Disbursements to Commonwealth	<u>(48,335)</u>
Balance due Commonwealth (County)	10,519
Audit adjustments	<u>(5,105)</u>
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) for the period March 1, 2018 to February 28, 2023	<u>\$ 5,414</u>



SHERIFF  
LANCASTER COUNTY  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR THE PERIOD  
MARCH 1, 2018 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2023

**Finding No. 1 - Inadequate Outstanding Check Procedures**

Our audit of the office checking account disclosed that the office was carrying 145 outstanding checks totaling \$162,992.83 dated from May 26, 2020 to August 31, 2022, that were still outstanding as of February 28, 2023. The time lapse ranged from 181 days to 1,008 days.

Good internal accounting controls require that the office follow-up on all outstanding checks. If a check is outstanding for a period over 180 days, efforts should be made to locate the payee. If efforts to locate the payee are unsuccessful, the amount of the check should be removed from the outstanding checklist, added back to the checkbook balance, and subsequently held in escrow for unclaimed escheatable funds.

The office staff stated that their current procedure for outstanding checks is to wait three years and then escheat them to the treasury per 72 P.S. §1301.9. Office staff also stated that they were not notified that this was a problem before.

Without a good system of internal controls over outstanding checks, the possibility of funds being lost or misappropriated increases significantly. Also, the failure to follow these procedures results in a weakening of internal controls over the cash account and inefficiency caused by the needless record-keeping of outstanding checks.

**Recommendations**

We recommend that the office establish and implement a procedure whereby outstanding checks are reviewed monthly to determine if there are any long outstanding checks. If checks remain outstanding and attempts to contact payees after 180 days are unsuccessful, the office should reinstate the outstanding check amounts to the checking account and subsequently hold these monies in escrow for unclaimed escheatable funds.

**Management's Response**

The County Officer responded as follows:

The Sheriff's Office will work to improve upon our procedures as it relates to outstanding checks.

**Auditor's Conclusion**

During our next audit, we will determine if the office complied with our recommendations.

SHERIFF  
LANCASTER COUNTY  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR THE PERIOD  
MARCH 1, 2018 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2023

**Finding No. 2 - Commonwealth's Portion Of Revenue Was Not Transmitted Timely**

Our audit disclosed that five of the ten payments made to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for the Deputy Sheriff's Training and Education Surcharges were not transmitted within the time period required. The time lapse from the due date to the date a check was issued ranged from five days to 17 days.

The following schedule identifies those funds that were transmitted late:

<u>Collection Period</u>	<u>Payment Due Date</u>	<u>Check Issuance Date</u>	<u>No. of Days Late</u>	<u>Amount</u>
03/02/20 – 08/31/20	09/08/20	09/14/20	6	\$ 19,080
09/01/20 – 02/28/21	03/05/21	03/10/21	5	20,072
03/01/21 – 08/31/21	09/08/21	09/16/21	8	30,718
03/01/22 – 08/31/22	09/08/22	09/13/22	5	33,688
09/01/22 – 02/28/23	03/07/23	03/24/23	17	33,890
Total				\$137,448

Also, our audit disclosed that two of the ten payments made to the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) for the Firearms License Validation Fees were not transmitted within the time period required. The time lapse from the due date to the date a check was issued ranged from 38 days to 76 days. Additionally, there was one payment that was never transmitted.

The following schedule identifies those funds that were transmitted late and not transmitted:

<u>Collection Period</u>	<u>Payment Due Date</u>	<u>Check Issuance Date</u>	<u>No. of Days Late</u>	<u>Amount</u>
09/01/21 – 02/28/22	03/07/22	04/14/22	38	\$ 5,824
03/01/22 – 08/31/22	09/08/22	11/23/22	76	5,861
09/01/22 – 02/28/23	03/07/23	Not Issued	-	6,191
				\$17,353

The Commonwealth's portion must be submitted semi-annually to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) for deposit into the Deputy Sheriff's Education and Training Account and Firearm License Validation Fees Account, respectively. The PCCD and PSP requires that the semi-annual report for the period March 1 to August 31 be postmarked by the 5<sup>th</sup> working day of September and that the semi-annual report for the period September 1 to February 28/29 be postmarked by the 5<sup>th</sup> working day of March.

SHERIFF  
LANCASTER COUNTY  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR THE PERIOD  
MARCH 1, 2018 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2023

**Finding No. 2 - Commonwealth's Portion Of Revenue Was Not Transmitted Timely  
(Continued)**

The office staff stated that they did not always remember to remit their checks timely to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP). Staff also indicated that office policy changed during the last two reporting periods of the audit regarding disbursements in that the sheriff's office no longer remit payments directly to PCCD and PSP. Instead, the office must submit payment voucher requests to the county controller's office who in turn issue checks directly to PCCD and PSP. Additionally, office staff stated that some payment voucher requests were sent to the county controller late and, as a result, the checks were issued late.

Adherence to the due date listed above would have ensured adequate internal control over payments to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP).

**Recommendation**

We recommend the office transmit the Commonwealth's portion of revenue as required by Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP).

**Management's Response**

The County Officer responded as follows:

The Sheriff's Office has identified a vendor that has not routinely submitted payments to our office in a timely manner which has delayed our office remitting checks to the state. We are currently working with the vendor to institute the electronic transfer of funds by ACH to expedite our receiving of these monies so we may in turn remit the funds to the state in a timely manner.

**Auditor's Conclusion**

We appreciate the office's efforts to correct these issues. During our next audit, we will determine if the office complied with our recommendation.

SHERIFF  
LANCASTER COUNTY  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION  
FOR THE PERIOD  
MARCH 1, 2018 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2023

This report was initially distributed to:

**Mr. Harrison Brooks**  
Commonwealth Accountant Manager  
Office of Comptroller Operations  
Accounts Receivable

**Corporal Daniel McGough, Jr.**  
Pennsylvania State Police  
Firearm Records Unit

**Mr. Derin Myers**  
Director  
Office of Financial Management and Administration  
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency

**The Honorable Stacy Garrity**  
Pennsylvania State Treasurer

**The Honorable Christopher R. Leppler**  
Sheriff

**The Honorable Joshua Parsons**  
Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners

**The Honorable Lisa Colón**  
Controller

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.PaAuditor.gov](http://www.PaAuditor.gov). Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 229 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: [news@PaAuditor.gov](mailto:news@PaAuditor.gov).