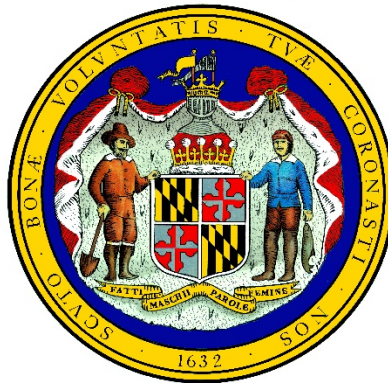


Audit Report

Maryland Food Center Authority

April 2025



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DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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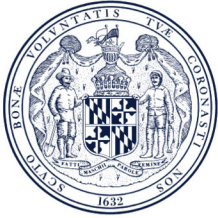
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DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AUDITS
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Victoria L. Gruber
Executive Director

Brian S. Tanen, CPA, CFE
Legislative Auditor

April 1, 2025

Senator Shelly L. Hettleman, Senate Chair, Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Delegate Jared Solomon, House Chair, Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Members of Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Annapolis, Maryland

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have conducted a fiscal compliance audit of the Maryland Food Center Authority (MFCA) for the period beginning March 1, 2021 to November 15, 2024. MFCA is primarily responsible for establishing, maintaining, operating, and promoting consolidated food markets within the State. MFCA owns and operates regional food industry facilities, including the Maryland Market Center and the Maryland Wholesale Produce Market located in Jessup, Maryland.

Our audit did not disclose any findings that warrant mention in this report.

We wish to acknowledge the cooperation extended to us during the audit by MFCA.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Tanen

Brian S. Tanen, CPA, CFE
Legislative Auditor

Background Information

Agency Responsibilities

The Maryland Food Center Authority (MFCA) is an instrumentality of the State of Maryland and a public corporation. The primary purpose of MFCA is to establish, maintain, operate, and promote consolidated food markets within the State. MFCA owns and operates regional food service facilities, including the Maryland Market Center and the Maryland Wholesale Produce Market located in Jessup, Maryland. MFCA's Board of Directors comprises 12 members including the Comptroller of Maryland; the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture; the Secretary of the Department of General Services; the Director of Maryland Cooperative Extension at University of Maryland, College Park; and private citizens appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

According to State records, MFCA's expenditures totaled \$4.6 million during fiscal year 2024, which is primarily funded through entrance and registration fees, service fees, and rental income generated from the operation of the aforementioned food service facilities.

Financial Statements

MFCA engaged an independent accounting firm to perform audits of its financial statements for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. In the related audit reports, the firm stated that MFCA's financial statements presented fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of MFCA, and the respective changes in financial position and cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Status of Findings From Preceding Audit Report

Our audit included a review to determine the status of the three findings in our preceding audit report dated August 18, 2021. See Figure 1 for the results of our review.

Figure 1 Status of Preceding Findings		
Preceding Finding	Finding Description	Implementation Status
Finding 1	MFCA issued 38 contract modifications after the two contracts had expired, including a \$1.9 million modification that increased the scope and more than tripled the cost of the original Maryland Market Center renovation contract.	Not repeated
Finding 2	MFCA’s current procurement policies and procedures were not approved by its Board of Directors as required by State law, and did not require Board approval of significant procurements to enhance oversight and control.	Not repeated
Finding 3	MFCA did not have a process to verify that changes to employee leave balances were proper.	Not repeated

Findings and Recommendations

Our audit did not disclose any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of the Maryland Food Service Authority’s (MFCA) internal control. Our audit also did not disclose any significant instances of noncompliance with applicable laws, rules, or regulations. Findings that did not warrant inclusion in this report were separately communicated to MFCA.

A draft copy of this report was provided to MFCA. Since there are no recommendations in this report, a written response was not necessary.

Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

We have conducted a fiscal compliance audit of the Maryland Food Service Authority (MFCA) for the period beginning March 1, 2021 and ending November 15, 2024. The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

As prescribed by the State Government Article, Section 2-1221 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the objectives of this audit were to examine MFCA’s financial

transactions, records, and internal control, and to evaluate its compliance with applicable State laws, rules, and regulations.

In planning and conducting our audit, we focused on the major financial-related areas of operations based on assessments of significance and risk. The areas addressed by the audit included accounts receivable, cash receipts, capital construction projects, payroll, procurement, and disbursements. We also determined the status of the findings contained in our preceding audit report.

Our assessment of internal controls was based on agency procedures and controls in place at the time of our fieldwork. Our tests of transactions and other auditing procedures were generally focused on the transactions occurring during our audit period of March 1, 2021 to November 15, 2024, but may include transactions before or after this period as we considered necessary to achieve our audit objectives.

To accomplish our audit objectives, our audit procedures included inquiries of appropriate personnel, inspections of documents and records, tests of transactions, and to the extent practicable, observations of the MFCA's operations. Generally, transactions were selected for testing based on auditor judgment, which primarily considers risk, the timing or dollar amount of the transaction, or the significance of the transaction to the area of operation reviewed. As a matter of course, we do not normally use sampling in our tests, so unless otherwise specifically indicated, neither statistical nor non-statistical audit sampling was used to select the transactions tested. Therefore, unless sampling is specifically indicated in a finding, the results from any tests conducted or disclosed by us cannot be used to project those results to the entire population from which the test items were selected.

We also performed various data extracts of pertinent information from the State's Financial Management Information System (such as revenue and expenditure data) and the State's Central Payroll Bureau (payroll data). The extracts are performed as part of ongoing internal processes established by the Office of Legislative Audits and were subject to various tests to determine data reliability. We determined that the data extracted from these sources were sufficiently reliable for the purposes the data were used during this audit.

We also extracted data from MFCA's financial system for the purpose of testing certain areas, such as accounts receivable. We performed various tests of the relevant data and determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes the data were used during the audit. Finally, we performed other auditing procedures that we considered necessary to achieve our audit objectives.

The reliability of data used in this report for background or informational purposes was not assessed.

MFCA's management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control. Internal control is a process designed to provide reasonable assurance that objectives pertaining to the reliability of financial records; effectiveness and efficiency of operations, including safeguarding of assets; and compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations are achieved. As provided in *Government Auditing Standards*, there are five components of internal control: control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication, and monitoring. Each of the five components, when significant to the audit objectives, and as applicable to MFCA, were considered by us during the course of this audit.

Because of inherent limitations in internal control, errors or fraud may nevertheless occur and not be detected. Also, projections of any evaluation of internal control to future periods are subject to the risk that conditions may change or compliance with policies and procedures may deteriorate.

Our reports are designed to assist the Maryland General Assembly in exercising its legislative oversight function and to provide constructive recommendations for improving State operations. As a result, our reports generally do not address activities we reviewed that are functioning properly.

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