Recommended Timeline for Single Audit Prep and the Audit Itself

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A Single Audit works best when the municipality follows a steady, year-round rhythm. Think of it like getting ready for a big project — you don't want to do everything at the last minute.

Below is an easy-to-follow timeline.

Throughout the Year — Build Good Habits

This is the foundation of a smooth audit.

- **Keep documentation organized**
- **Follow internal controls**
- **Track federal spending clearly**
- **Monitor grant rules**

Doing these things all year long prevents surprises later.

3 to 6 Months Before Year End — Begin Audit Preparation

This is a good time to:

- Identify all federal programs and grants.
- Review grant agreements and compliance requirements.
- Begin preparing or updating the Schedule of Federal Awards (SEFA) tracking schedule.
- Review procurement, payroll, and reporting procedures.

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- Resolve any known accounting or documentation issues.

This is also when early coordination with the auditors often begins. The auditors may provide:

- A planning meeting or kickoff call
- A request list of documents needed for the audit
- Guidance on timelines and expectations
- Information about major programs likely to be tested

Right After Year End — Start Schedule of Federal Award (SEFA) Preparation

In the first month after your fiscal year closes, begin pulling together the **Schedule of Federal Awards (SEFA).**

- **List all federal awards**
- **Confirm Assistance Listing Numbers**
- **Match totals to your accounting system**

Months 1 to 2 — Early Coordination With Auditors

Month 1 to 2 is when communication really begins.

- **Share your draft SEFA**

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- **Provide requested documents**
- **Discuss any new federal programs**
- **Set the audit schedule**

Auditors will tell you what they need and when they need it. Start gathering the information as soon as possible.

Month 2 to 3 — Audit Fieldwork

This is when auditors do the main testing. Ideally, it will be two to three months after your fiscal year closes.

- **Answer auditor questions**
- **Provide extra documents quickly**
- **Clarify processes when needed**

Fieldwork can be done on site or remotely, depending on the audit plan.

Good communication during fieldwork is very important. The municipality should respond to requests promptly and let the auditors know if additional time is needed to gather information.

Months 3 to 4 — Draft Findings and Review

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If auditors find issues, they will share them with you. This should occur within a month or two of the auditors completing the field work.

- **Review draft findings**
- **Prepare management responses and corrective action plans**
- **Discuss corrections**

This is your chance to explain or correct anything before the report is final.

Remember, federal grant rules require you to promptly follow up and take corrective action on audit findings. This includes preparing a summary schedule of prior audit findings and a corrective action plan in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.511(b) and (c), respectively.

Months 3 to 5 — Final Report and Submission

The auditors issue the final report within two to three weeks after you respond to the draft findings. Either the auditor or the municipality must submit the final report it to the federal clearinghouse. If you want the auditor to do this, be sure to include that task in your Single Audit Request for Proposals.

- **Submit the Single Audit package** to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse.
- **Submit the Single Audit to any funders** that have require it.
- **Keep records for future audits.**

The Single Audit package is due within the earlier of:

- 30 days after the audit reports are issued, or

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- 9 months after the end of the fiscal year being audited.

A good Single Audit timeline is steady, predictable, and communication-friendly. If the municipality stays organized during the year, prepares the SEFA early, and works closely with auditors, the process becomes much easier and far less stressful.

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