

RCW 43.09.470 Comprehensive performance audits—Scope—Reports.

In addition to audits authorized under RCW 43.88.160, the state auditor shall conduct independent, comprehensive performance audits of state government and each of its agencies, accounts, and programs; local governments and each of their agencies, accounts, and programs; state and local education governmental entities and each of their agencies, accounts, and programs; state and local transportation governmental entities and each of their agencies, accounts, and programs; and other governmental entities, agencies, accounts, and programs. The term "government" means an agency, department, office, officer, board, commission, bureau, division, institution, or institution of higher education. This includes individual agencies and programs, as well as those programs and activities that cross agency lines. "Government" includes all elective and nonelective offices in the executive branch and includes the judicial and legislative branches. The state auditor shall review and analyze the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of the policies, management, fiscal affairs, and operations of state and local governments, agencies, programs, and accounts. These performance audits shall be conducted in accordance with the United States general accounting office government auditing standards. The scope for each performance audit shall not be limited and shall include nine specific elements: (1) Identification of cost savings; (2) identification of services that can be reduced or eliminated; (3) identification of programs or services that can be transferred to the private sector; (4) analysis of gaps or overlaps in programs or services and recommendations to correct gaps or overlaps; (5) feasibility of pooling information technology systems within the department; (6) analysis of the roles and functions of the department, and recommendations to change or eliminate departmental roles or functions; (7) recommendations for statutory or regulatory changes that may be necessary for the department to properly carry out its functions; (8) analysis of departmental performance data, performance measures, and self-assessment systems; and (9) identification of best practices. The state auditor may contract out any performance audits. For counties and cities, the audit may be conducted as part of audits otherwise required by state law. Each audit report shall be submitted to the corresponding legislative body or legislative bodies and made available to the public on or before thirty days after the completion of each audit or each follow-up audit. On or before thirty days after the performance audit is made public, the corresponding legislative body or legislative bodies shall hold at least one public hearing to consider the findings of the audit and shall receive comments from the public. The state auditor is authorized to issue subpoenas to governmental entities for required documents, memos, and budgets to conduct the performance audits. The state auditor may, at any time, conduct a performance audit to determine not only the efficiency, but also the effectiveness, of any government agency, account, or program. No legislative body, officeholder, or employee may impede or restrict the authority or the actions of the state auditor to conduct independent, comprehensive performance audits. To the greatest extent possible, the state auditor shall instruct and advise the appropriate governmental body on a step-by-step remedy to whatever ineffectiveness and inefficiency is discovered in the audited entity. For performance audits of state government and its agencies, programs, and accounts, the legislature must consider the state auditor reports in connection with the legislative appropriations process. An annual report will be

submitted by the joint legislative audit and review committee by July 1st of each year detailing the status of the legislative implementation of the state auditor's recommendations. Justification must be provided for recommendations not implemented. Details of other corrective action must be provided as well. For performance audits of local governments and their agencies, programs, and accounts, the corresponding legislative body must consider the state auditor reports in connection with its spending practices. An annual report will be submitted by the legislative body by July 1st of each year detailing the status of the legislative implementation of the state auditor's recommendations. Justification must be provided for recommendations not implemented. Details of other corrective action must be provided as well. The people encourage the state auditor to aggressively pursue the largest, costliest governmental entities first but to pursue all governmental entities in due course. Follow-up performance audits on any state and local government, agency, account, and program may be conducted when determined necessary by the state auditor. Revenues from the performance audits of government account, created in RCW 43.09.475, shall be used for the cost of the audits. [2006 c 1 s 2 (Initiative Measure No. 900, approved November 8, 2005).]

Policies and purposes—2006 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 900): "It is essential that state and local governments establish credibility with the taxpayers by implementing long-overdue performance audits to ensure accountability and guarantee that tax dollars are spent as cost-effectively as possible. Are politicians spending our current tax revenues as cost-effectively as possible? Voters don't know because politicians have repeatedly blocked our state auditor from conducting independent, comprehensive performance audits on state and local governments, agencies, programs, and accounts. Currently, Washington is the only state in the nation that prohibits the independently elected state auditor from doing the job he or she was hired to do without explicit legislative permission. This handicap is costing the taxpayers billions of dollars in potential savings. Thankfully, this common sense initiative remedies this egregious failure of politicians to enact this reform. It is absurd for politicians to unilaterally impose tax increases or to seek voter approval for tax increases without first learning if we're getting the biggest bang for the buck from our current tax revenues. This measure requires the state auditor to conduct independent, comprehensive performance audits on state and local governments, agencies, programs, and accounts. This act dedicates a portion of the state's existing sales and use tax (1/100th of 1%) to fund these comprehensive performance audits. Similar performance reviews in Texas have saved taxpayers there nine billion dollars out of nineteen billion dollars in identified savings over the past decade. The performance audits required by this common sense initiative will identify solutions to our public policy problems, saving the taxpayers billions of dollars." [2006 c 1 s 1 (Initiative Measure No. 900, approved November 8, 2005).]

Construction—2006 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 900): "The provisions of this act are to be liberally construed to effectuate the intent, policies, and purposes of this act." [2006 c 1 s 7 (Initiative Measure No. 900, approved November 8, 2005).]

Severability—2006 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 900): "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2006 c 1 s 8 (Initiative Measure No. 900, approved November 8, 2005).]

Part headings not law—2006 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 900): "Part headings used in this act are not part of the law." [2006 c 1 s 9 (Initiative Measure No. 900, approved November 8, 2005).]