Performance Measurement of Homelessness Programs

Commerce and local governments comply with key planning and reporting requirements.

As Commerce responds to 2018 legislation, it should clearly demonstrate how its actions measurably contribute to the state’s goal of ending homelessness.

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Performance measurement and Reporting requirements for homelessness programs

JLARC to evaluate:

Performance-based contracting at the Office of Homeless Youth
  • Adequacy and effectiveness

Compliance with statutory requirements
  • Performance measurement
  • Reporting
  • Washington State Quality Award (WSQA) application

2017-19 Operating Budget, § 103
Legislative Auditor makes two recommendations

Commerce should clearly explain how its actions will measurably contribute to the state’s goal of ending homelessness when it implements the planning and reporting requirements in RCWs 43.185C.040 and 43.185C.045.

Commerce concurs

Commerce should implement processes to track compliance with WSQA application requirements in RCW 43.185C.210.

Commerce concurs

Office of Homeless Youth Part of the Department of Commerce

Commerce has made progress implementing a 2017 JLARC recommendation.

- Helps avoid double-counting and improves the ability to evaluate program outcomes.

New law allows minors to give consent for personal information to be in the state database.

- Helps avoid double-counting and improves the ability to evaluate program outcomes.
Compliance with statutory requirements

Local governments and Commerce comply with key requirements and provide comprehensive data.
Commerce uses **5 performance measures across the homelessness system**

1. **Total entries** to a homelessness program
2. **Entries from unsheltered locations**
3. **Length of time an individual is served** by a homelessness program:
   - Emergency shelter
   - Temporary housing
4. **Exits to permanent housing**
5. **Individuals who return to homelessness**
Commerce reports data through interactive online tools

**measures of ENTRIES**

- Total Project Entries
- Median Length of Time Homeless
- Exits to Permanent Housing
- Returns to Homelessness
- Unsheltered Entries
- Rental Vacancy Rate
- Point in Time (PIT) Count of Homeless Persons

**measure of TIME IN A PROGRAM**

- 2015
- 2016
- 2017

**measures of EXITs or RETURNS**

- 81,054
- 68
- 55%

LINKED FROM THE JLARC REPORT: commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/homelessness/homeless-system-performance/
Current strategic plan does not measure how actions help achieve the state’s goal to end homelessness.
Current strategic plan does not measure how actions help achieve the state’s goal to end homelessness.

Plan has goals, strategies, and actions.

Do Plan has deliverables to indicate if the action was done.

Check Plan has performance measures but does not link them to actions. It is unclear how some actions measurably contribute to the state’s goal.

Adjust
2018 legislation changed key planning and reporting requirements.

Chapter 85, Laws of 2018

State homelessness plan now must include:
- Short- and long-term goals
- Implementation strategy
- Performance measures

Annual progress report now must include:
- Current conditions
- Progress toward goals
- Funding and expenditures
- Outcomes
Commerce should clearly explain how its actions will measurably contribute to the state’s goal of ending homelessness when it implements the planning and reporting requirements in RCWs 43.185C.040 and 43.185C.045.

Commerce concurs
Compliance with requirement for application to Washington State Quality Award (WSQA)


Assessment of quality management and performance systems.

Statute requires some homeless or housing organizations to apply.
Unclear if all organizations that must apply to WSQA have done so

**ORGANIZATIONS REQUIRED TO APPLY**
Organization receives $500,000+ in state and local homeless/housing funds.

Commerce collects data about money spent, but not money received.

**ORGANIZATIONS THAT DO APPLY**
Organization must apply for WSQA

Performance Excellence Northwest (PENW) conducts assessment.

PENW is not required to notify or coordinate with Commerce.
Commerce should implement processes to track compliance with WSQA application requirements in RCW 43.185C.210.

Commerce concurs
Full Report

leg.wa.gov/jlarc/AuditAndStudyReports