



# Proposed Study Questions: Public Records Training, Consultation, and Grants Programs

State of Washington Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee

May 2019

## JLARC will evaluate three programs that help local governments manage their public records

Washington's Public Records Act (PRA) requires state and local governments to make their public records available to the public. In 2017, the Legislature established three programs focused on helping local government agencies manage their public records and meet the requirements of the PRA.

1. The **State Archives' training services program** provides advice, guidance, and support in public records management to local government agencies. State agencies can access training as well.
2. The **Attorney General's consultation program** assists local government agencies with developing best practices and complying with PRA requirements.
3. The **State Archives' grants program** provides funding to local government agencies to improve retention, management, and disclosure of public records.

The Legislature directed JLARC to review the programs, focusing on the:

- Number of program participants & amount of grant funding distributed.
- Types of training and consultation provided.
- Effectiveness of each program.

The review must also address whether the programs meet legislative intent.

## Evaluation will focus on program participation and outcomes

JLARC staff will answer the following questions about the three public records programs:

1. What types of grants, trainings, and consultations were provided and how did agencies access them?
  - a. Which agencies participated in the programs, where are they located, and what services did they receive?
  - b. How did the Attorney General's Office and State Archives identify agency needs and communicate services available?
  - c. What did agencies report about their ability to access services?
  - d. How did the Attorney General's Office and State Archives select or prioritize service recipients?
2. Are the grant, training, and consultation programs meeting legislative intent to provide assistance and improve technology systems?
  - a. How satisfied are local governments with the services they received?
  - b. What changes have agencies implemented as a result of the programs?
  - c. How do the Attorney General's Office and State Archives measure effectiveness of their services?

### What is a public record?

A public record is any written, recorded, emailed, or illustrated documentation of a government activity or function. The record is public if it is prepared, used, or retained by a state or local agency (including a city, county, district, or similar governmental entity).

All records maintained by state and local agencies are available for public inspection unless the law specifically exempts them.

## Study timeframe

Preliminary Report: December 2019

Proposed Final Report: January 2020

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## Study team

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## JLARC Study Process

