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.

Suzanna Pratt | Rebecca Connolly

May 2019

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.
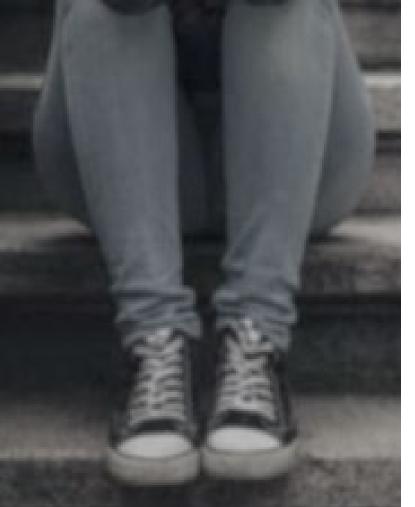
Commerce concurs

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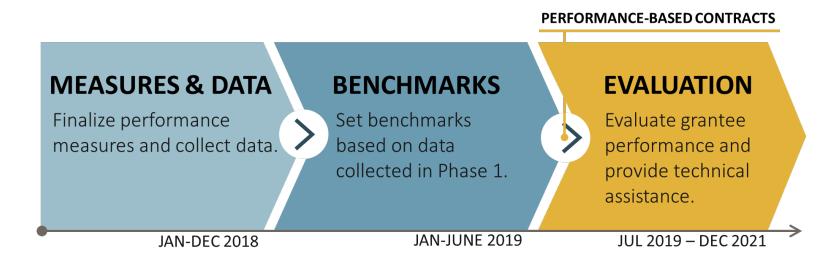
Commerce concurs

Office of Homeless Youth

Part of the Department of Commerce

Commerce has made progress implementing a 2017 JLARC recommendation.

PERFORMANCE-BASED CONTRACTS

MEASURES & DATA
Finalize performance measures and collect data.

BENCHMARKS
Set benchmarks based on data collected in Phase 1.

EVALUATION
Evaluate grantee performance and provide technical assistance.

JAN-DEC 2018   JAN-JUNE 2019   JUL 2019 – DEC 2021

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.
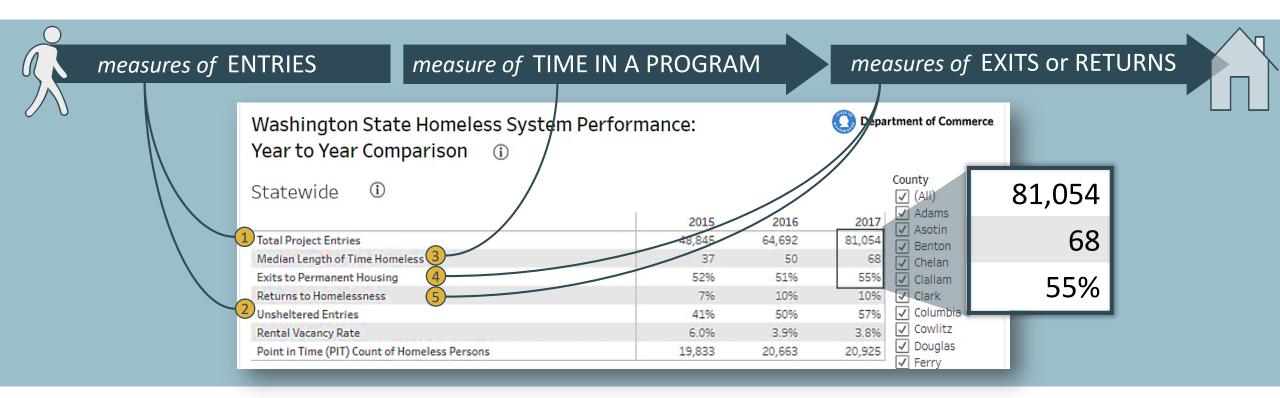
Compliance with statutory requirements

Local governments and Commerce comply with key requirements and provide comprehensive data.

Commerce uses
5 performance measures
across the homelessness system

measures of ENTRIES

① **Total entries** to a homelessness program

② **Entries from unsheltered** locations

measure of TIME IN A PROGRAM

③ **Length of time an individual is served** by a homelessness program:
- Emergency shelter
- Temporary housing

measure of EXITS

④ **Exits to permanent housing**

measure of RETURNS

⑤ **Individuals who return** to homelessness

Commerce reports data through *interactive online tools*

measures of ENTRIES → measure of TIME IN A PROGRAM → measures of EXITS or RETURNS

Washington State Homeless System Performance: Year to Year Comparison
Department of Commerce

Statewide

	2015	2016	2017
① Total Project Entries	48,845	64,692	81,054
③ Median Length of Time Homeless	37	50	68
④ Exits to Permanent Housing	52%	51%	55%
⑤ Returns to Homelessness	7%	10%	10%
② Unsheltered Entries	41%	50%	57%
Rental Vacancy Rate	6.0%	3.9%	3.8%
Point in Time (PIT) Count of Homeless Persons	19,833	20,663	20,925

County
☑ (All)
☑ Adams
☑ Asotin
☑ Benton
☑ Chelan
☑ Clallam
☑ Clark
☑ Columbia
☑ Cowlitz
☑ Douglas
☑ Ferry

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

Plan	Plan has goals, strategies, and actions.
Do	Plan has deliverables to indicate if the action was done.
Check	
Adjust	

Current strategic plan
does not measure how actions help achieve the state's goal to end homelessness

Plan has goals, strategies, and actions.

Plan

Do

Plan has deliverables to indicate if the action was done.

Check

Adjust

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

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
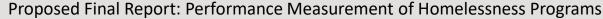- Performance measures

Annual progress report now must include:

- Current conditions
- Progress toward goals
- Funding and expenditures
- Outcomes

Legislative Auditor's Recommendation #1

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)

Established by Legislature in 1994.

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.

Organization must apply for WSQA →

ORGANIZATIONS THAT DO APPLY
Performance Excellence Northwest (PENW) conducts assessment.

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

PENW is not required to notify or coordinate with Commerce.

Legislative Auditor's Recommendation #2

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

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