JLARC WASHINGTON

Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee

The Legislature's nonpartisan performance auditors

Ignition Interlock Device Compliance and Monitoring

Legislative Auditor's conclusion

Half of the drivers required to install ignition interlock devices earn less than $28,000 per year. Installation rates increase with income.

The state offers financial assistance, but its reach is limited.

Key points

- Drivers who are convicted of driving under the influence must install an ignition interlock device in any vehicle they drive.
- Overall, 41% of drivers who are required to install an ignition interlock device do so.
- The installation rate among the lowest earners was 30%. It was 74% among the highest earners.
- A device costs about $2,700 per year. Fines and insurance can increase the total to $5,000.
- The state's financial assistance program struggles with customer service, inefficiency, and lack of strategy.
- The Department of Licensing and Washington State Patrol can improve interagency coordination and advise the Legislature on ways to improve the installation rate.

Recommendations

1. Licensing should establish clear objectives, responsibilities, and performance goals for the financial assistance program.
2. Licensing and State Patrol should create a formal agreement to jointly administer their ignition interlock responsibilities.
3. Licensing and State Patrol should develop a coordinated strategy to increase the installation rate and report back to the Legislature.

Contact us

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Read the full report

leg.wa.gov/jlarc/audits

January 2026

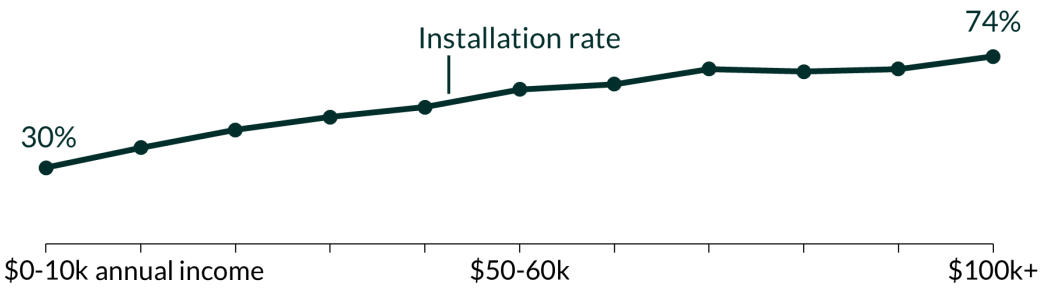
JLARC is a Washington state legislative committee that works to improve state government. It has members from the House and Senate, evenly split between the parties. JLARC's nonpartisan staff complete audits mandated by the Legislature. We follow professional standards to ensure our work is thorough, independent, and free from bias.

Installation rates increase with income

Of the drivers required to install a device since 2018:

- 41% completed the requirement or have a device currently installed.
- 59% did not have a device installed as of June 2025.
  The data does not show if they continue to drive.

We analyzed the effect of income, requirement length, and the time it takes to drive to the nearest service center. Income had the most significant effect on installation rates.



Source: JLARC staff analysis of Licensing and Employment Security Department (ESD) data.

Drivers cannot "wait out" the requirement

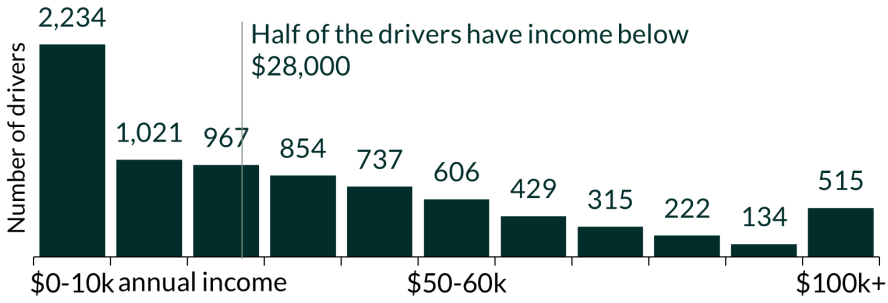
Drivers convicted of driving under the influence must either:

- Install and use a device, or
- Permanently avoid driving.

Financial assistance is available but has limited reach

Drivers pay to install and maintain devices. A device costs about $2,700 per year.

- Financial assistance reimburses about $1,400.
- Drivers who receive financial help account for about 11% of installations.
- More are likely eligible for assistance.



Source: JLARC staff analysis of Licensing and ESD data.

Financial assistance program struggles with customer service, inefficiency, and lack of strategy

Licensing administers the financial assistance program. Multiple divisions and employees share program responsibility. Communication challenges and unclear roles have led to problems such as:

- Contradictory information provided to customers on the reimbursement process.
- Duplicated work, such as multiple staff working to correct the same vendor reporting issues.
- Manufacturers not held accountable for submitting timely and accurate data for driver's records.

Improving oversight and installation rates

The 2024 Legislature indicated that it wanted to improve installation rates.

Licensing and State Patrol depend on each other to carry out their statutory responsibilities but lack formal coordination.

- Using leading practices like clear roles, common goals, and performance measures would support more effective administration.

Neither agency has statutory responsibility for installation rates or driver outreach.

- They are well positioned to recommend actions, statutory changes, and resources needed to achieve the Legislature's goal.