



State of Washington
Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee

Status report

Implementation of State Auditor I-900 Recommendations to the Legislature

As required by Initiative 900



JULY 2024

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Summary

Initiative 900 requires the State Auditor’s Office (SAO) to conduct performance audits

In November 2005, Washington’s citizens approved Initiative 900 (I-900). The initiative directs the State Auditor’s Office (SAO) to conduct performance audits of state and local government agencies.

Recent SAO audits included no new recommendations to the Legislature

The State Auditor released 12 new performance audit reports in 2023. None of these reports include recommendations to the Legislature. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) held a [public hearing](#) for each of the audits.

2023 SAO performance audits	Report links
1. WSDOT Toll Collection System Replacement Project	Report link
2. Evaluating Customer Service at Washington's Department of Employment Security	Report link
3. Washington's Agricultural Commodity Commissions: An assessment of effectiveness	Report link
4. Opportunities to Improve State Information Technology Security – 2022	Report link
5. Opportunities to Improve Technology Security at Critical Infrastructure Organizations - 2022	Report link
6. Opportunities to Improve School Safety Planning: Following up on selected issues from the 2019 report	Report link
7. Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission: Opportunities are Present to Support Efforts by the Commission to Speed Licensing	Report link
8. Washington Medical Commission: Opportunities Are Present to Support the Commission’s Continued Efforts to Improve Timelier Licensing and an Efficient Disciplinary Process	Report link
9. Controls to Manage Outdated Computer Applications	Report link
10. Opportunities to Improve IT Security at Local Governments Fiscal Year 2023	Report link
11. Medicaid and Managed Care Organizations: Ensuring strong program integrity efforts and accurate encounter data	Report link
12. K-12 Education During and After the Pandemic: Opportunities to learn from changes made in K-12 educational methods	Report link

Initiative 900 requires JLARC to report the status of SAO's recommendations to the Legislature

By July 1 of each year, JLARC must report the status of SAO's recommendations to the Legislature. JLARC does not report on SAO's recommendations to state or local governments.

JLARC staff review the status of SAO's recommendations after each legislative session. The review includes:

- New recommendations (i.e., those made in the calendar year before the legislative session).
- Unresolved recommendations from previous years. JLARC staff follow up on recommendations for a total of four years, unless legislative or other action is taken that resolves the issue.

Initiative 900 also states that "justification must be provided for recommendations not implemented." Since no individual or entity can singularly speak to the reason for legislative action or inaction, JLARC staff could not identify sufficient and appropriate evidence to make definitive conclusions about why recommendations have not been implemented to date. In some cases, the information included in the JLARC staff summary comments provides context for the Legislature's actions.

This report demonstrates JLARC's compliance with the status reporting requirement for 2024.

Implementation status of the SAO recommendations to the Legislature

The table below summarizes the status of the SAO’s recommendations to the Legislature.

- **New:** SAO did not issue any recommendations to the Legislature in 2023.
- **Unresolved:** The appendix includes the status of three recommendations that were unresolved coming into the 2024 legislative session.
- **Previously resolved:** These recommendations were addressed in status reports in prior years.

Definitions of the reporting categories follow the table.

		Implemented	Not Implemented		Other	
SAO Recommendations to the Legislature	Total	Adopted as presented	Bill introduced but not adopted	No formal action taken	Made different policy choice	Other circumstances
New in 2023	0					
Unresolved from 2020, 2021, or 2022	3*		1	1	1	
Previously resolved from 2020, 2021, or 2022	1	1				
Total	4					

* Two of the three unresolved recommendations are from a single report addressing K-12 Student Behavioral Health in Washington.

Reporting categories used by JLARC

Implemented

- **Adopted as presented:** The Legislature passed legislation to implement a recommendation in the manner presented by the audit.

Not Implemented

- **Bill introduced but not adopted:** Bills related to the recommendation topic were introduced, but not adopted.
- **No formal action taken:** No bills were introduced and no legislation passed. In some cases, the Legislature may have held work sessions or discussions on the topic.

Other

- **Made different policy choice:** The Legislature passed legislation with a policy choice that differed from the recommendation.
- **Other circumstances:** Other circumstances have occurred that may impact the applicability of the recommendation (e.g., change to federal law, administrative rule, or executive branch program).

Recommendation status details

Previously Unresolved 2022 Recommendations

Prescription Monitoring Program: Evaluating System Processes and Program Oversight

Released 10/7/2022 | [Link to SAO report](#)

About the Audit: SAO summary

The Department of Health’s (DOH) Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) began operating more than 10 years ago. Its goals include improving patient care, reducing the abuse of controlled substances, and helping medical professionals reduce overprescribing. This performance audit identified detailed steps that will help DOH improve the effectiveness of this program.

SAO Recommendation to the Legislature

To allow greater oversight of the PMP by independent state auditors, as described on pages 31-35 of the audit, the SAO recommended the Legislature amend state law so that independent state auditors, including the Office of the Washington State Auditor and the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee can have the authority to access identifiable PMP data.

JLARC staff status review and summary comments

Implementation Status Recommendation #1:	Not implemented – No formal action taken
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Comments:	No action was taken during the 2024 Legislative Session.
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Previously Unresolved 2021 Recommendations

K-12 Student Behavioral Health in Washington: Opportunities to improve access to needed supports and services

Released 6/22/2021 | [Link to SAO report](#)

About the Audit: SAO summary

This performance audit evaluates how the public K-12 school districts are addressing student behavioral health prevention and early intervention, and the larger state system in place to coordinate and support these services.

SAO Recommendation to the Legislature

To provide greater state-level coordination and promote equitable access to students across the state, as described on pages 25-27 of the audit, the SAO recommends the Legislature:

1. Designate either the Health Care Authority (HCA) or the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) as the lead state agency tasked with ensuring student access to the continuum of behavioral health services in school settings.

This legislation should reference existing laws and requirements to prevent any duplication, overlap, or fragmentation of duties related to student behavioral health services. It should also include language to ensure school districts and educational service districts comply with all requirements.

2. Allocate funding to the lead state agency with requirements to:
 - o Establish and maintain an advisory council with representatives from HCA, OSPI, educational service districts, school districts, and other key partners such as managed care organizations and community providers. The council's responsibilities should include:
 - Establishing strategic direction and goals for programming around the full continuum of services funded under this legislation.
 - Developing outcome and performance measures and reporting them to the Legislature annually.
 - Providing guidance to school districts and service districts on how funds can be used.
 - o Provide flexible funding to educational service districts and school districts that will help them develop comprehensive behavioral health services to address the needs of their students, either directly in schools or through community partnerships.
 - o Provide upfront funding to educational service districts and school districts seeking to become Medicaid behavioral health providers, as described on page 35 of the audit.

JLARC staff status review and summary comments

Implementation Status Recommendation #1:	Not implemented – Bills introduced but not adopted
Comments:	SB 6216/HB 2280 would have directed OSPI in collaboration with HCA, DCYF, AESD, and other state agencies to develop a framework for coordinated student support related to behavioral health.

**Implementation Status
Recommendation #2:**

Other – Made different policy choice

Comments:

Although no lead agency was designated, the 2023-25 operating budget (ESSB 5187) and the 2024 supplemental operating budget (ESSB 5950) contain appropriations for DOH, OSPI, and educational service districts relevant to student behavioral health supports.