

**RCW 44.28.005 Definitions.** Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Economy and efficiency audits" means performance audits that establish: (a) Whether a state agency or unit of local government receiving state funds is acquiring, protecting, and using its resources such as personnel, property, and space economically and efficiently; (b) the causes of inefficiencies or uneconomical practices; and (c) whether the state agency or local government has complied with significant laws and rules in acquiring, protecting, and using its resources.

(2) "Ethnic commissions" means the Washington state commission on African American affairs established in chapter 43.113 RCW, the Washington state commission on Asian Pacific American affairs established in chapter 43.117 RCW, and the Washington state commission on Hispanic affairs established in chapter 43.115 RCW.

(3) "Final compliance report" means a written document, as approved by the joint committee, that states the specific actions a state agency or unit of local government receiving state funds has taken to implement recommendations contained in the final performance audit report and the preliminary compliance report. Any recommendations, including proposed legislation and changes in the agency's rules and practices or the local government's practices, based on testimony received, must be included in the final compliance report.

(4) "Final performance audit report" means a written document adopted by the joint legislative audit and review committee that contains the findings and proposed recommendations made in the preliminary performance audit report, the final recommendations adopted by the joint committee, any comments to the preliminary performance audit report by the joint committee, and any comments to the preliminary performance audit report by the state agency or local government that was audited.

(5) "Joint committee" means the joint legislative audit and review committee.

(6) "Legislative auditor" means the executive officer of the joint legislative audit and review committee.

(7) "Local government" means a city, town, county, special purpose district, political subdivision, municipal corporation, or quasi-municipal corporation, including a public corporation created by such an entity.

(8) "Performance audit" means an objective and systematic assessment of a state agency or any of its programs, functions, or activities, or a unit of local government receiving state funds, by an independent evaluator in order to help public officials improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. Performance audits include economy and efficiency audits and program audits. A performance audit of a local government may only be made to determine whether the local government is using state funds for their intended purpose in an efficient and effective manner.

(9) "Performance measures" are a composite of key indicators of a program's or activity's inputs, outputs, outcomes, productivity, timeliness, and/or quality. They are means of evaluating policies and programs by measuring results against agreed upon program goals or standards.

(10) "Preliminary compliance report" means a written document that states the specific actions a state agency or unit of local

government receiving state funds has taken to implement any recommendations contained in the final performance audit report.

(11) "Preliminary performance audit report" means a written document prepared for review and comment by the joint legislative audit and review committee after the completion of a performance audit. The preliminary performance audit report must contain the audit findings and any proposed recommendations to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, or accountability of the state agency or local government audited.

(12) "Program audits" means performance audits that determine: (a) The extent to which desired outcomes or results are being achieved; (b) the causes for not achieving intended outcomes or results; and (c) compliance with significant laws and rules applicable to the program.

(13) "State agency" or "agency" means a state agency, department, office, officer, board, commission, bureau, division, institution, or institution of higher education. "State agency" includes all elective offices in the executive branch of state government. [2021 c 310 § 3; 1996 c 288 § 2.]

**Reviser's note:** The definitions in this section have been alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k).

**Findings and intent—1996 c 288:** "The public expects the legislature to address citizens' increasing demand for the basic services of state government, while limiting the growth in spending. The public demands that public officials and state employees be accountable to provide maximum value for every dollar entrusted to state government. The public believes that it is possible to improve the responsiveness of state government and to save the taxpayers' money, and that efficiency and effectiveness should result in savings.

The legislature, public officials, state employees, and citizens need to know the extent to which state agencies, programs, and activities are achieving the purposes for which they were created. It is essential to compare the conditions, problems, and priorities that led to the creation of government programs with current conditions, problems, and priorities, and to examine the need for and performance of those programs in the current environment.

Along with examining the performance of state agencies and programs, the legislature, public officials, state employees, and citizens must also consider the effect that state government programs can reasonably expect to have on citizens' lives, how the level of programs and services of Washington state government compares with that of other states, and alternatives for service delivery, including other levels of government and the private sector including not-for-profit organizations. It is essential that the legislature, public officials, state employees, and citizens share a common understanding of the role of state government. The performance and relative priority of state agency programs and activities must be the basis for managing and allocating resources within Washington state government.

It is the intent of the legislature to strengthen the role of the current legislative budget committee so that it may more effectively examine how efficiently state agencies perform their responsibilities and whether the agencies are achieving their goals, and whether units of local government are using state funds for their intended purpose in an efficient and effective manner. It is also the intent of the legislature to enact a clear set of definitions for different types of

audits in order to eliminate confusion with regard to government reviews." [1996 c 288 § 1.]