

Generative AI Use Case

Identifying Potential Performance Audit Topics

[GENERAL USE]

Use Case Summary

Performance audits begin with a mini proposal. The goal is to generate a minimum of 125 ideas per biennium. PA staff and other SAO staff are allotted a couple of hours to develop each mini proposal. If the process of generating mini proposal ideas via AI can reduce the time it takes to develop a mini proposal from about 2 hours down to 15 minutes or less, at least 217 staff hours per biennium could be saved.

Additionally, using AI might reduce the likelihood of bias entering into the topics selected for PA's biennial workplan. Presently, the vast majority of mini proposals are generated by PA staff based on topics of interest to them or issues they encountered in their daily lives. However, performance auditors are a rather homogeneous group of highly educated upper-middle class individuals with finely tuned critical thinking skills, whose interests and experiences may not be reflective of the typical Washington state citizen. The internet is a vast compilation of information posted by a broad array of individuals. As such, an AI search for potential performance audit topics may be more reflective of the interests and experiences of the general citizenry.

Summary of Pilot Process

I began my search for a potential audit topic proposal by asking AI what the key concerns of Washington state citizens are about state government. From there, I selected a particular topic and then asked a series of follow up questions to narrow down to a specific audit topic. To determine the viability of the audit topic, I asked AI for information on any known evaluations already planned on the process and what additional evaluation should occur. I then used AI to generate potential ideas for performance audit objectives.

Using this approach, I was able to generate all the information I would need to submit a performance audit topic proposal about Washington's new electronic vehicle incentives for low-income citizens. See the appendix for the prompts I used and the responses I received from Chat GPT. If I wanted to develop additional audit topic proposals, I could easily back up to one of my earlier queries to begin generating many more potential performance audit topics.

Generative AI Tool or Platform

Either Chat GPT or CoPilot can be used for this purpose. The free version of CoPilot allows only a limited number of queries per day but does provide references for the information it provides. Chat GPT allows for more queries per day under the free version but does not always provide concrete information about its sources. This can be dealt with to some extent by either prefacing a session by specifically requesting Chat GPT to provide sources, or by following up a query by prompting it to provide the sources it used to generate its response. However, testing of this approach indicates that the specificity of information provided by Chat GPT to such prompts can be hit or miss. Although having ready access

to the sources used by the AI tool is handy to inform further phases of audit topic development, knowing the specific sources is not necessarily at this early phase of proposing an audit topic (see all the checks and balances that are built into the performance audit selection process, as described under Checking for Accuracy).

Inputs

The user may already have a specific audit topic in mind, but if not, an AI session will likely start with a general question such as, “What are citizen’s concerns about Washington state government?” From there, follow up queries based on AI’s response to the prior question will help the user narrow in on a specific performance audit topic and explore other relevant information necessary to form a viable audit topic proposal. See the appendix for some potential prompts that I used to start with a general query, and then narrow in a specific viable audit topic.

Processing

In this Use Case, AI will be used as an enhanced internet search tool, summarizing information found across the internet on a particular topic or question.

Outputs

The output from AI will be used to generate further refined prompts, until a viable performance audit topic is identified. Information generated via these prompts could provide all the information necessary for adding a potential topic to the [performance audit topic proposal list](#).

Checking for Accuracy

The current processes for approving performance audit topics already protect SAO from any inaccuracies that could occur as a result of using AI to generate a potential performance audit topic. There are numerous checks and balances built into the system to prevent poor quality ideas for performance audits from progressing into approved topics.

First, auditor judgement is used to evaluate a potential audit topic before it is ever proposed via a mini proposal. All mini proposals are then reviewed by PA’s leadership team, and only the most promising proceed to the phase of developing a full proposal. During the process of developing a full proposal, an independent auditor researches the topic and assesses its viability as a potential performance audit topic. PA’s leadership team then reviews these full proposals and selects only the most promising topics for its proposed audit workplan. From there, the proposed audit workplan must get approved by the SAO Cabinet. Even if a poor choice for a performance audit topic were to get through all these layers of review, all performance audits begin with the Scoping & Planning process where the details of the topic are thoroughly researched, and the viability of the audit topic is carefully assessed. Only those topics worthy of further research proceed on to the Fieldwork and Reporting phases.

Limitations on Use

Auditor judgement will need to be used in addition to AI responses to come to a conclusion on whether or not a particular audit topic is viable. For example, in testing this use of AI, I first focused in on public disclosure. From there, I learned that legislative privilege is a key concern, particularly when it comes to rezoning and the potential for bias to enter into the process due to the political affiliation of the

legislator involved in making rezoning decisions. I asked AI what some of the best practices are for eliminating this bias, and one of the suggestions was the formation of an independent board to make rezoning decisions. Upon asking AI what Washington state is doing to address this potential bias, I learned that our state is one of the few states that already uses an independent board for this purpose. Thus, this wasn't a good topic to propose for a performance audit in this state.

Security or Privacy Concerns

This proposed use of AI involves asking these tools to search the internet for existing information. It does not require the inputting of original material. Therefore, security or privacy concerns are extremely minimal.

Approval Log

Approved By:	Date:
AI Oversight Committee	
Executive Team	

Appendix:

You said:

what are citizens' top concerns about washington state government's economy, efficiency, effectiveness, or equity?

ChatGPT said:

ChatGPT

Searched 5 sites

Citizens in Washington State have several top concerns related to the state government's economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity.

1. **Economic Justice and Affordability:** A significant concern revolves around economic justice, particularly in terms of affordable housing and job opportunities. Residents are worried about the rising costs of living and whether the state is doing enough to ensure that low-income and marginalized communities have access to affordable housing and fair employment opportunities.
2. **Equity in Access to Services:** There are concerns about whether state services are being equitably distributed across different demographics. This includes access to quality education, healthcare, and transportation, with particular attention to how these services are provided to underrepresented communities.
3. **Environmental Justice and Climate Action:** With Washington's strong focus on transitioning to a clean economy, there is an ongoing debate about how these changes impact different communities. Citizens are concerned about the effectiveness of policies aimed at reducing carbon emissions and whether they are implemented in a way that benefits everyone, particularly low-income families who might struggle with the costs of transitioning to cleaner energy sources.
4. **Government Efficiency and Transparency:** Transparency in government actions, particularly around budgeting and the use of public funds, is another major concern. People want to ensure that the state government is using resources efficiently and that programs, especially those related to climate action and public health, are both effective and accessible.
5. **Health Equity:** Access to healthcare and the equitable distribution of health services is a critical issue, especially given the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and economic disparities that affect health outcomes. Citizens are focused on how the state can improve health services for all, particularly for communities that have been historically underserved.

These concerns reflect a broader desire for the Washington State government to ensure that its policies are not only effective but also fair and inclusive, ensuring that all residents can benefit from economic opportunities, public services, and environmental protections.

For further details, you can explore resources from the [Washington State Office of Equity](#) ([Office of Equity](#)

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[Office of Equity](#)

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You said:

what is washington state doing to make electric vehicle usage more equitable?

ChatGPT said:

ChatGPT

Washington State is taking several steps to make electric vehicle (EV) usage more equitable, focusing on ensuring that all residents, particularly those from low-income and marginalized communities, can access and benefit from the shift to cleaner transportation.

1. **Low-Income EV Incentives:** The state has introduced significant rebates specifically targeting low-income residents to help them afford electric vehicles. These include up to \$9,500 in rebates for new or used EVs, which can significantly reduce the upfront cost barrier for low-income households.
2. **Community Charging Infrastructure:** Washington is investing in expanding EV charging infrastructure in underserved areas. This includes placing chargers in rural and low-income communities where access has traditionally been limited. The state aims to ensure that all residents, regardless of where they live, have the ability to charge their vehicles conveniently.
3. **Targeted Outreach and Education:** The state is actively working to raise awareness about EV benefits and available incentives among diverse communities. Outreach programs are being designed to educate low-income and minority communities about the economic and environmental benefits of EVs, as well as how to take advantage of state programs.
4. **Public Transit Electrification:** Washington is also focusing on electrifying public transit systems, which directly benefits low-income individuals who rely on public transportation. By transitioning buses and other public vehicles to electric, the state

reduces greenhouse gas emissions and improves air quality in urban areas, particularly benefiting communities disproportionately affected by pollution.

5. **Policy and Legislative Support:** The Washington State Office of Equity is collaborating with various state agencies to ensure that equity considerations are integrated into all transportation policies. This includes efforts to ensure that the benefits of EV adoption, such as reduced transportation costs and improved public health, are distributed fairly across all demographic groups (

[Office of Equity](#)

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[Office of Equity](#)

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These initiatives are part of a broader strategy to create an inclusive and equitable transition to a clean energy economy in Washington, ensuring that all communities can participate in and benefit from the shift to electric vehicles.

You said:

what concerns are there about washington state's new low income electric vehicle incentive?

ChatGPT said:

ChatGPT

Searched 4 sites

Washington State's new low-income electric vehicle (EV) incentive program offers significant rebates—up to \$9,000 for a three-year lease and \$5,000 for a purchase of a new EV, or \$2,500 for used vehicles. This program aims to make EVs more accessible to lower-income residents, addressing cost barriers that have previously limited their adoption.

However, there are several concerns regarding the program:

6. **Limited Reach and Awareness:** Although the program is designed to be inclusive, there's concern that awareness and accessibility might be limited, especially in rural areas or among communities less familiar with EV technology. Outreach and education efforts will be crucial to ensuring that eligible residents are informed about and can benefit from these incentives.
7. **Upfront Costs:** Despite the rebates, some critics argue that the initial costs of EVs, even with rebates, could still be prohibitive for many low-income individuals. The cost of EV charging infrastructure, like home chargers, and the ongoing costs associated with maintenance could further dissuade potential buyers.
8. **Sustainability of Funding:** The program is currently funded through June 2025 or until the allocated funds run out. There is uncertainty about what happens if the funds are

exhausted quickly, which could leave many potential beneficiaries without access to the rebates.

9. **Program Complexity:** While the rebate process is intended to be simple, involving instant discounts at the point of sale, navigating the specifics—such as determining eligibility and understanding the full financial impact—might still be challenging for some buyers, especially those without financial literacy.

Overall, while the program has the potential to significantly increase EV adoption among low-income households, these concerns highlight the need for ongoing support, clear communication, and possibly additional funding to ensure its success and sustainability.

For more detailed information, you can refer to sources like KNKX Public Radio, Spokane Public Radio, and Gear Musk.

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You said:

Will there be any evaluations of the program?

ChatGPT said:

ChatGPT

Yes, Washington State plans to evaluate its new low-income electric vehicle (EV) incentive program. The state's Department of Commerce, which is overseeing the initiative, intends to monitor and assess the program's impact over time. This evaluation will focus on various aspects, such as the program's effectiveness in increasing EV adoption among low-income households, the geographic distribution of rebates, and the overall sustainability and accessibility of the incentives.

The evaluations will likely include tracking the number of rebates issued, analyzing demographic data to ensure the program reaches diverse communities, and gathering feedback from participants to identify potential areas for improvement. Additionally, the program's administrators may assess whether the incentives effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging the transition from gasoline-powered vehicles to electric ones.

These evaluations will be crucial for determining the program's success and for informing any future modifications or expansions that might be necessary to better meet the needs of Washington's residents (

[Gear Musk](#)

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[KNKX](#)

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You said:

what additional evaluation should be done on this program?

ChatGPT said:

ChatGPT

In addition to the planned evaluations by Washington State, several other assessments could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the program's impact:

10. **Longitudinal Study on EV Retention and Use:** It would be beneficial to track participants over several years to see if they continue using electric vehicles beyond the initial lease or purchase period. This could help identify if the program leads to sustained EV adoption or if participants revert to gasoline-powered vehicles after incentives expire.
11. **Economic Impact Analysis:** An evaluation could assess the broader economic effects of the program, such as its impact on local dealerships, job creation in the EV sector, and any economic benefits from increased consumer spending power due to lower vehicle operating costs.
12. **Environmental Impact Assessment:** While the program aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it would be important to measure the actual environmental benefits achieved. This could include tracking the reduction in emissions, the impact on air quality, and any decrease in reliance on fossil fuels.
13. **Equity and Accessibility Study:** Evaluating how well the program reaches underserved communities, such as rural areas or historically marginalized groups, is crucial. This could involve analyzing geographic and demographic data to identify any disparities in program participation.
14. **Program Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness:** An analysis of the program's administrative costs versus its benefits could help determine if the rebates are the most efficient way to increase EV adoption among low-income households. This might include comparing the cost-effectiveness of different incentive amounts or models.
15. **Consumer Satisfaction and Feedback:** Gathering qualitative data from participants regarding their experiences with the program could provide insights into any barriers or challenges faced during the application and purchase process, helping to refine and improve future programs.

These additional evaluations would help create a more nuanced picture of the program's successes and challenges, guiding future policy decisions and potentially serving as a model for other states (

[Gear Musk](#)

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[KNKX](#)

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[Spokane Public Radio](#)

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Is this conversation helpful so far?

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ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info

what objectives would be good questions for a performance audit of washington state's low income electric vehicle incentive?

ChatGPT said:

ChatGPT

Conducting a performance audit of Washington State's low-income electric vehicle (EV) incentive program requires asking key questions that assess the program's economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity. Here are some objectives that would form good questions for such an audit:

1. Program Accessibility and Reach

- **Objective:** Assess whether the program effectively reaches its target audience.
- **Questions:**
 - How effectively is the program reaching low-income and marginalized communities, particularly in rural or underserved areas?
 - What percentage of the eligible population is aware of and utilizing the incentive?
 - Are there any geographic or demographic disparities in program participation?

2. Cost-Effectiveness

- **Objective:** Determine whether the program delivers value for money.
- **Questions:**
 - What are the total administrative costs of the program relative to the benefits delivered?
 - How does the cost of providing these incentives compare to other similar programs in different states or regions?
 - Are the rebates leading to significant savings for participants, and how does this impact the overall economy?

3. Impact on EV Adoption

- **Objective:** Evaluate the program's effectiveness in increasing EV adoption among low-income households.
- **Questions:**
 - How many low-income households have purchased or leased an EV due to the incentive?

- What is the rate of EV adoption in communities that have benefited from the program compared to those that have not?
- Is there evidence that the program is contributing to long-term increases in EV ownership among low-income groups?

4. Environmental and Social Impact

- **Objective:** Assess the broader impacts of the program on the environment and public health.
- **Questions:**
 - How has the program contributed to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, particularly in areas with high participation rates?
 - Are there measurable improvements in air quality in communities where EV adoption has increased?
 - How does the program contribute to the state's overall environmental justice goals?

5. Equity and Inclusivity

- **Objective:** Ensure that the program is equitable and inclusive in its implementation.
- **Questions:**
 - Are there barriers that prevent certain groups from accessing the program (e.g., language, lack of credit history, or other financial constraints)?
 - How well is the program addressing the specific needs of minority and historically disadvantaged communities?
 - What adjustments could be made to increase equity in program participation and benefits?

6. Sustainability and Scalability

- **Objective:** Evaluate the program's long-term sustainability and potential for expansion.
- **Questions:**
 - Is the current level of funding sufficient to meet demand, or are there risks of running out of funds before the program's end date?
 - What are the lessons learned that could be applied to scale the program or replicate it in other regions?
 - How resilient is the program to changes in market conditions, such as fluctuations in EV prices or the introduction of new technologies?

These objectives and questions would help ensure that the program is not only effective and efficient but also equitable, transparent, and capable of delivering its intended outcomes over the long term.