[Skip to content](https://chatgpt.com/c/67698c8a-098c-8007-80aa-f737ced0e244" \l "main)

**Chat history**

**You said:**

I need some help writing a memo on my office's performance audit function. I'm going to give you some snippets of text from a couple of different sources, then I'll ask you to help me write part of the memo. For now, just say "OK" as I upload each snippet.

**ChatGPT said:**

OK

**You said:**

this is the preamble to the voter initiative that created our performance audit function: Policies and purposes—2006 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 900): "It is essential that state and local governments establish credibility with the taxpayers by implementing long-overdue performance audits to ensure accountability and guarantee that tax dollars are spent as cost-effectively as possible. Are politicians spending our current tax revenues as cost-effectively as possible? Voters don't know because politicians have repeatedly blocked our state auditor from conducting independent, comprehensive performance audits on state and local governments, agencies, programs, and accounts. Currently, Washington is the only state in the nation that prohibits the independently elected state auditor from doing the job he or she was hired to do without explicit legislative permission. This handicap is costing the taxpayers billions of dollars in potential savings. Thankfully, this common sense initiative remedies this egregious failure of politicians to enact this reform. It is absurd for politicians to unilaterally impose tax increases or to seek voter approval for tax increases without first learning if we're getting the biggest bang for the buck from our current tax revenues. This measure requires the state auditor to conduct independent, comprehensive performance audits on state and local governments, agencies, programs, and accounts. This act dedicates a portion of the state's existing sales and use tax (1/100th of 1%) to fund these comprehensive performance audits. Similar performance reviews in Texas have saved taxpayers there nine billion dollars out of nineteen billion dollars in identified savings over the past decade. The performance audits required by this common sense initiative will identify solutions to our public policy problems, saving the taxpayers billions of dollars." [ 2006 c 1 s 1 (Initiative Measure No. 900, approved November 8, 2005).]

**ChatGPT said:**

OK

**You said:**

This is the law that was passed under the voter initiative: omprehensive performance audits—Scope—Reports. In addition to audits authorized under RCW 43.88.160, the state auditor shall conduct independent, comprehensive performance audits of state government and each of its agencies, accounts, and programs; local governments and each of their agencies, accounts, and programs; state and local education governmental entities and each of their agencies, accounts, and programs; state and local transportation governmental entities and each of their agencies, accounts, and programs; and other governmental entities, agencies, accounts, and programs. The term "government" means an agency, department, office, officer, board, commission, bureau, division, institution, or institution of higher education. This includes individual agencies and programs, as well as those programs and activities that cross agency lines. "Government" includes all elective and nonelective offices in the executive branch and includes the judicial and legislative branches. The state auditor shall review and analyze the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of the policies, management, fiscal affairs, and operations of state and local governments, agencies, programs, and accounts. These performance audits shall be conducted in accordance with the United States general accounting office government auditing standards. The scope for each performance audit shall not be limited and shall include nine specific elements: (1) Identification of cost savings; (2) identification of services that can be reduced or eliminated; (3) identification of programs or services that can be transferred to the private sector; (4) analysis of gaps or overlaps in programs or services and recommendations to correct gaps or overlaps; (5) feasibility of pooling information technology systems within the department; (6) analysis of the roles and functions of the department, and recommendations to change or eliminate departmental roles or functions; (7) recommendations for statutory or regulatory changes that may be necessary for the department to properly carry out its functions; (8) analysis of departmental performance data, performance measures, and self-assessment systems; and (9) identification of best practices. The state auditor may contract out any performance audits. For counties and cities, the audit may be conducted as part of audits otherwise required by state law. Each audit report shall be submitted to the corresponding legislative body or legislative bodies and made available to the public on or before thirty days after the completion of each audit or each follow-up audit. On or before thirty days after the performance audit is made public, the corresponding legislative body or legislative bodies shall hold at least one public hearing to consider the findings of the audit and shall receive comments from the public. The state auditor is authorized to issue subpoenas to governmental entities for required documents, memos, and budgets to conduct the performance audits. The state auditor may, at any time, conduct a performance audit to determine not only the efficiency, but also the effectiveness, of any government agency, account, or program. No legislative body, officeholder, or employee may impede or restrict the authority or the actions of the state auditor to conduct independent, comprehensive performance audits. To the greatest extent possible, the state auditor shall instruct and advise the appropriate governmental body on a step-by-step remedy to whatever ineffectiveness and inefficiency is discovered in the audited entity. For performance audits of state government and its agencies, programs, and accounts, the legislature must consider the state auditor reports in connection with the legislative appropriations process. An annual report will be submitted by the joint legislative audit and review committee by July 1st of each year detailing the status of the legislative implementation of the state auditor's recommendations. Justification must be provided for recommendations not implemented. Details of other corrective action must be provided as well. For performance audits of local governments and their agencies, programs, and accounts, the corresponding legislative body must consider the state auditor reports in connection with its spending practices. An annual report will be submitted by the legislative body by July 1st of each year detailing the status of the legislative implementation of the state auditor's recommendations. Justification must be provided for recommendations not implemented. Details of other corrective action must be provided as well. The people encourage the state auditor to aggressively pursue the largest, costliest governmental entities first but to pursue all governmental entities in due course. Follow-up performance audits on any state and local government, agency, account, and program may be conducted when determined necessary by the state auditor. Revenues from the performance audits of government account, created in RCW 43.09.475, shall be used for the cost of the audits.

**ChatGPT said:**

OK

**You said:**

This is the text from our website that explains performance audits: The importance of performance audits Performance audits evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs with the goal of making them work better. These audits compare what an agency is currently doing against what's required by law and recommended by leading practices to look for improved outcomes that could include money saving methods or better processes for service delivery. By detailing problems and offering solutions, performance audits improve public services and provide valuable information to the public, program leadership and elected officials. Created by Voters The authority and funding for performance audits was granted by Washington voters with the 2005 passage of Initiative 900. Performance audits are one more way that the State Auditor's Office helps build trust in state and local government. Download a copy of Initiative 900 (PDF) » What programs are subject to performance audits? Any state agency or local government could be the subject of a performance audit. To maximize the potential of performance audits to improve public services, most focus on large, state-level programs. Past audits have included how to improve the Department of Corrections' Correctional Industries program, how to reduce state costs through faster Medicaid income verification, and assessments of the state's implementation of the Regulatory Fairness Act. Cybersecurity audits are a special type of performance audit conducted by our office. These audits examine information technology systems used in government operations. They look for weaknesses in that technology and propose solutions to help strengthen those systems.

**ChatGPT said:**

OK

**You said:**

I need a 400-500 word introduction for my memo. I want to convey several things about our performance audit function. 1) It was created by the voters 2) it helps make government work better 3) the initiative encourages us to be agressive and look at big issues. Before you begin, please ask a few questions that will help you craft a better response.

**ChatGPT said:**

To help me craft a more tailored introduction for your memo, here are a few questions:

1. **Audience**: Who will be reading this memo? Are they familiar with performance audits, or do they need background information?
2. **Tone**: Would you prefer the tone to be formal and factual, or more conversational and persuasive?
3. **Key Focus Areas**: Should the introduction emphasize any particular challenges or successes the performance audit function has addressed in recent years?
4. **Strategic Goals**: Do you want to mention any specific goals or priorities for the audit function, such as improving public trust or targeting specific sectors (e.g., education, transportation)?
5. **Call to Action**: Should the introduction hint at any actions or follow-ups (e.g., legislative support, public awareness) that you want readers to consider?

These details will help make the introduction align with your objectives.

**You said:**

1. The audience is legislators. They are familiar with performance audits, but not necessarily our work. 2. Persuasive but professional 3. No. I'll get to that later in the memo. 4. Yes. Our stated vision is "to increase trust in government" so working that them into this would be helpful. Also, we do focus on areas such as issues involving vulnerable populations, areas with known problems, and areas involving public safety. 5. Not yet.

**ChatGPT said:**

Updated saved memory

Great! Here’s a draft of the memo introduction based on your answers:

**Introduction:**

Washington State’s performance audit function was created by voters through the passage of Initiative 900 in 2005, reflecting a clear demand for greater accountability and efficiency in government. This initiative was designed to empower the State Auditor’s Office to independently review the effectiveness and efficiency of state and local government programs. By addressing issues of public concern, performance audits not only identify cost-saving opportunities but also contribute to making government work better for everyone.

The initiative’s mandate goes beyond simple oversight. Voters recognized the importance of aggressively tackling the state’s most pressing issues, particularly in areas with significant public impact. Our performance audits prioritize large programs, especially those that affect vulnerable populations, areas where problems are well-documented, and those involving public safety. By focusing on these high-stakes areas, we help government agencies improve service delivery, making sure public resources are used wisely and effectively.

At the heart of this work is a commitment to increasing public trust in government. Performance audits offer an independent, objective evaluation of how agencies are performing, allowing both policymakers and the public to understand where improvements are needed. Whether it’s enhancing the effectiveness of a correctional program, streamlining processes within the Medicaid system, or bolstering cybersecurity, our goal is to deliver recommendations that result in meaningful change.

Ultimately, our performance audits serve as a tool for ensuring that government operates in the best interests of the people. By shedding light on inefficiencies and offering concrete solutions, we help build a more transparent, accountable government—one that taxpayers can trust.

Let me know if you’d like any adjustments!

**You said:**

I've combined and cut down the last two paragraphs. However, it sounds a bit preachy to me. Could you rewrite this for me, making it a bit less dramatic? "The primary goal of all of our work is to increase public trust in government. Ultimately, our performance audits serve as a tool for ensuring that government operates in the best interests of the people. By shedding light on inefficiencies and offering concrete solutions, we help build a more transparent, accountable government—one that taxpayers can trust. "

**ChatGPT said:**

Certainly! Here’s a more straightforward and less dramatic version of that section:

"Our primary goal is to increase public trust in government. Performance audits are a valuable tool for helping government operate more effectively. By identifying inefficiencies and providing practical recommendations, we support a more transparent and accountable government that better serves the public."

This version is more concise and neutral while still conveying the key message. Let me know if it fits better!

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info.