

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Work in progress: Audit description

Data and System Backup and Disaster Recovery

Washington state agencies need to keep their data and information technology (IT) systems safe from a variety of events including network outages, security breaches, and natural disasters. Being unprepared for these types of events can lead to a disruption of critical state services, loss of revenue, lost records, and decreased organizational effectiveness. On the other hand, when agencies regularly review, test and update their disaster recovery plans, it can mean the difference between a fast recovery with minimal impact and days or even weeks of damaging downtime.

Standards set by the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) require state agencies set up backup procedures for their data and applications, as well as a disaster recovery plan. This means agencies must develop priorities, recovery-time objectives, and strategies for restoring IT hardware, applications and data to meet their important business needs. Earlier audits performed by our Office found agencies generally had data backup procedures, but many did not have a current and tested disaster recovery plan. These agencies also did not perform tests to verify they can restore critical data.

Preliminary scope and objectives

This performance audit will determine whether three state agencies consistently perform and test data and system backups. It will also examine whether the agencies have a current and tested disaster recovery plan in place for three selected systems. Finally, it will compare agency policies and procedures to state requirements and best practices, and identify key areas for improvement to help the agencies better prepare for potential future incidents.

This performance audit will seek to answer the following questions:

- Have selected state agencies implemented data and system backup policies and procedures that comply with state requirements and align with best practices?
- Do the selected state agencies have a current, tested, disaster recovery plan that complies with state requirements and aligns with best practices?

Timing

We plan to publish the audit results in early fall 2020.



Office of the
Washington
State Auditor
Pat McCarthy

**Director of
Performance and
IT Audit:**
Scott Frank

(564) 999-0809

Scott.Frank@sao.wa.gov

**Principal
Performance Auditor:**
Shauna Good, CPA

(564) 999-0825

Shauna.Good@sao.wa.gov

**Assistant Audit
Manager:**
Diana Evans, CPA

(564) 999-0952

Diana.Evans@sao.wa.gov

Office of the
Washington State
Auditor

P.O. Box 40021

Olympia, WA

98504-0021

www.sao.wa.gov

[@WASateAuditor](https://twitter.com/WASateAuditor)

May 2019