

Cabinet and Governor Appointed Agencies' Performance Audit Action Item(s) & Status

Barriers to Home Care Aide Certification

(See also [cabinet agency response](#) for full context to Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO) [report](#), November 2016)

The Departments of Health (DOH) and Social and Health Services (DSHS) were included for this performance audit.

SAO Conclusion: Although the agencies (DSHS & DOH) and their partners have made improvements to the process since the implementation of Initiative-1163, some applicants still face barriers and drop out of the process.

SAO Issues Summary:

1. Stronger efforts to make it easier for applicants to complete the process, such as making access to training and the exam more accessible and addressing challenges for limited English proficiency applicants, could improve completion rates for the home care aide certification program.

SAO Recommendations (Rec) Summary:

1. DOH and DSHS work with the Training Partnership to review data on the languages applicants request interpreters for to determine if they need to expand the number of languages currently available for training and the exam.
2. DOH and DSHS work with their partners to emphasize the importance of taking the exam on the scheduled date.
3. DSHS continue to work with the Training Partnership and community instructors to increase training locations and adopt flexible schedules.
4. DOH work to reduce the distances applicants have to travel by working with its test provider, Prometric, to increase the number of testing sites in the state.

The table below shows the current status of action items the agency initiated to address issues identified in the performance audit report. Please see the [cabinet agency response](#) for additional context and any additional steps already taken.

For an explanation of the columns below, [see the legend](#).

Issue/ Rec	Status	Action Steps	Lead Agency	Due Date	Current Resources ?	Budget Impact?	Legislation Required?	Notes
Rec 1	Complete	DOH will continue to monitor language requests on a monthly basis.	DOH	On-going	Y	N	N	3/18: DOH translated the certification exam into Amharic in May 2017. Demand for Amharic made translating the exam for more cost effective than continuing to provide individual interpreters. DOH continues to monitor language requests on a monthly basis to ensure individual interpreters are offered as needed and exams are translated based on demand.
Rec 1	Complete	DSHS will continue to work with the Training Partnership	DSHS	On-going				7/17: The Training Partnership has changed how they are working with Limited English

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		to determine the need to expand the number of languages currently available for training.						Proficiency (LEP) students to determine what class they should attend. Instead of asking “What is your primary language?” they are now asking “what language do you speak at home?” and what language do you read in?” They found that when they asked “What is your primary language” that the student thought since they were living in the USA that they had to say English. They believe this new approach may be more effective in getting the student into the right course for better success. They have also mapped the learning journey for the LEP learner to identify pain points and opportunities for improvement and are providing this to agency employers to use as a resource. Due to increased demand DOH and Prometric are now offering the exam in Amharic.
Rec 2	Complete	DOH will update the website and the authorization to test notifications sent to applicants to emphasize the importance of taking the exam on the scheduled date	DOH	1/17	Y	N	N	3/18: OCS continuously works to improve communication on the website and through correspondence with applicants. These messages were shared at the close of the audit, but through other more recent changes are no longer in place. The message will be reposted. We have also implemented other improvements to emphasize the importance of taking the exam on time; such as an email validation notices at initial intake of a new application.
Rec 2	Complete	DSHS will ask the training programs to emphasize to their students the importance of taking the exam on their scheduled date.	DSHS	1/17				7/17: DSHS has updated the check list for Individual providers and all employers to emphasis that HCA applicants should take the first exam that Prometric offers them. DSHS had two meetings with our

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								community instructors to reinforce their use of the check list as well to make sure that their students understand all the steps to becoming certified as a Home Care Aide. The Training Partnership is also continuing to train their in house instructors and their subcontractors on how to use the checklist to make sure they inform their students of all the required steps and timelines accurately and effectively.
Rec 2	Complete	DSHS will update communications for individual providers, home care agency employers/staff, adult family homes and assisted living providers/staff to emphasize the importance of applicants taking the Prometric exam on the first scheduled date to reduce the time frame between curriculum completion and test taking.	DSHS	1/17				7/17: The check list for Individual Providers and all other employers has been updated to reinforce the requirement to apply for the home care agency credential through DOH within 14 days of hire and to register for training within this same 14 days of hire as well as to take the first exam Prometric offers the candidate once they have completed training to increase the likelihood of passing the knowledge and skills portion of the exam. This also should assist candidates to obtaining training and their Home Care Aide Credential within their deadline.
Rec 3	Complete	DSHS will continue to work with the Training Partnership and community instructors to expand the number of training locations and adopt flexible schedules.	DSHS	On-going				7/17: DSHS has over 172 community instructors that offer the 75 hour training across the state at multiple locations and flexible time frames to accommodate their student's needs. We do not hear complaints about training from community instructors. The Training Partnership is currently offering a new class starting every week of the calendar year exempt Christmas in King County to accommodate

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								demand. They are also offering multiple weekend options and are also offering a course that will occur over 4 weeks instead of the usual 2 week time period, where one week the class is in the morning and the next week the class is in the afternoon.
Rec 4	Complete	DOH will work with Prometric to add test sites, with emphasis in the Yakima area.	DOH	On-going	Y	N	N	3/18: Prometric test site is now open in Yakima. DOH and Prometric continually monitors test demand and stakeholder input for any additional areas that are underserved.