

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

Opportunities to Better Identify and Serve K-12 Students Experiencing Homelessness

(See also [cabinet agency response](#) for full context to Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO) [report](#), April, 2019)

The Department of Commerce was included in this performance audit.

SAO Recommendations summary to Commerce (Rec):

1. To make it easier for districts to access and use available funds, as described on pages 16-19, we recommend that Commerce:
 - a. Reach out to school districts to better understand factors that discourage districts from applying for funding and simplify the grant application process accordingly.
 - b. Provide districts more flexibility in using HSSP grant to provide rent assistance to students

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.a.	Complete	If SSB 5324 is not enacted, Commerce will reach out to school districts to better understand barriers to applying for funding	Commerce	7/2019	Yes	No	No	N/A, the legislation was enacted, see 1.a below.
Rec. 1.a.	Complete	If SSB 5324 is enacted, Commerce will reach out to both school districts and local homeless service providers to better understand barriers to applying for funding, and to explore the potential of school districts leveraging the administrative capacity of housing providers to apply for these funds.	Commerce	7/2019	Yes	No	No	Commerce engaged a technical assistance provider, Building Changes, to work with Commerce, school districts, and housing providers to identify barriers and assist with identifying improvements to the HSSP program, and to evaluate implementation. School districts are ineligible to apply directly for funding due to legislative restrictions limiting the funding to non-profits. Engagements included pre-proposal webinars and one-on-one discussions

Issue/ Rec	Status	Action Steps	Lead Agency	Due Date	Current Resources?	Budget Impact?	Legislation Required?	Notes
								with school district liaisons and housing providers.
Rec. 1.b.	Complete	Commerce will determine next steps on contracting and service provisions, including the use of HSSP funding	Commerce	7/2019	Yes	No	No	After review of the program with stakeholders and a subsequent update of the program policies, as of January 2020 the HSSP program allows grant funds to be used for rental assistance.