

JAY INSLEE  
Governor



JAMES WEAVER  
Director &  
State Chief Information Officer

STATE OF WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

*Washington's Consolidated Technology Services Agency*  
1500 Jefferson Street SE • Olympia, Washington 98504-1501

December 22, 2020

The Honorable Pat McCarthy  
Washington State Auditor  
P.O. Box 40021  
Olympia, WA 98504-0021

Dear Auditor McCarthy:

On behalf of the audited entities, thank you for the opportunity to review and respond to the State Auditor's Office (SAO) performance audit report "Continuing Opportunities to Improve State IT Security – 2020."

We agree that the security of IT systems and data underpins the stability of government operations, and the safety and well-being of the state and its residents. Protecting these systems is of paramount interest to all of us and a responsibility of every state organization.

We value the commitment from your office to help improve the state's security posture. Cyber threats continue to evolve rapidly and we all must continually strengthen protections of our systems and data. We appreciate the efforts of your team in helping us do so.

We also appreciate the SAO's recognition of the steps the audited entities have already taken to protect systems and data. Please thank your team for their collaborative approach throughout this performance audit.

We continue to welcome the SAO's observations and recommendations of what to improve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Weaver".

James Weaver  
Director & State Chief Information Officer

Enclosure

cc: Jamila Thomas, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor  
Kelly Wicker, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor  
Keith Phillips, Director of Policy, Office of the Governor  
David Schumacher, Director, Office of Financial Management  
Christine Bezanson, Director, Results Washington, Office of the Governor  
Tammy Firkins, Performance Audit Liaison, Results Washington, Office of the Governor  
Vinod Brahmapuram, State Chief Information Security Officer, Washington Technology Solutions  
Scott Bream, State Information Security Policy Officer, Washington Technology Solutions  
Scott Frank, Director of Performance Audit, Office of the Washington State Auditor

## OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT ON CONTINUING OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE STATE IT SECURITY – 2020

DEC. 22, 2020

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This management response to the State Auditor’s Office (SAO) performance audit report received December 2, 2020, is coordinated by the State’s Chief Information Officer on behalf of the audited entities.

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### SAO PERFORMANCE AUDIT OBJECTIVES:

The SAO sought to answer this question:

1. Can selected agencies make their IT systems more secure, and better align their IT security practices with leading practices?
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**SAO Recommendations to the five selected state agencies:** to help strengthen IT security programs, and to protect agency systems and the information within those systems, we recommend:

1. Further align agency IT security programs with leading practices recommended in the Center for Internet Security “CIS” Controls.
2. Identify and continue to periodically assess the agency’s IT security needs and resources, including personnel and technology, to mature and maintain sufficient security.
3. Continue remediating vulnerabilities identified during the security testing, starting with those that most significantly affect them.

### STATE RESPONSE:

We agree with the opportunities for improvement identified by the SAO to help strengthen IT security and are committed to ongoing assessment and improvement. The state recognizes the importance of continuously improving security and takes that charge seriously. The organizations audited have already made improvements and continue to work carefully through the findings and recommendations. Consideration will also be given to further aligning IT security programs with the leading practices recommended in the CIS Controls. These controls are more prescriptive than the OCIO IT security standards 141.10 that agencies are required to follow. The OCIO will use the findings and observations of this and previous audits to work with all state organizations to improve the state’s security posture.

### Action Steps and Time Frame

- Each audited entity will work with the appropriate governing bodies to address vulnerabilities, improvements and considerations suggested by the SAO during calendar year 2021.