King County
Auditor's Office

Law Enforcement Audit Program
2026 Biennial Report

ADVANCING LAW ENFORCEMENT PERFORMANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND EQUITY

The King County Auditor's Office performs independent oversight of county departments and offices for King County residents and policymakers, improving the equity, efficiency, and effectiveness of county services through impactful audit recommendations. The King County Council established the Law Enforcement Audit Program within the Auditor's Office in 2006 to specifically focus on oversight of the County's criminal legal system. This biennial report addresses the program's work over the last two years.

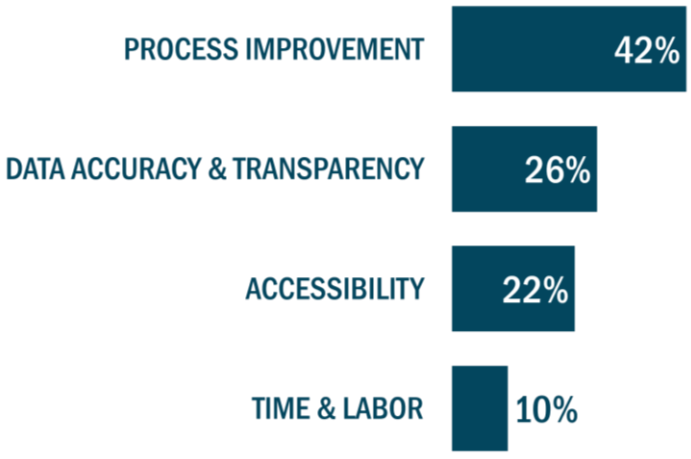
High Impact Oversight

Between 2024 and 2026, we provided oversight to all county functions whose missions relate to the criminal legal system in King County. During this period, we:

- **published three audits and one companion letter** featuring issues related to the operations of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention, the Jail Health Services division of Public Health-Seattle & King County, and the King County Sheriff's Office.
- **published 19 follow-up reports on recommendations from 12 audits**, working with agencies to understand their implementation efforts and presenting updates on implementation in public reports to the King County Council.

Recommendations to Improve Transparency, Accessibility, and Process

We make recommendations to entities throughout the King County criminal legal system. During this biennial period, our 31 recommendations to criminal legal agencies sought improvements across a range of issues:



Seeking input for our oversight of the King County criminal legal system

Any member of the public with audit ideas is invited to share them through our website. We look forward to incorporating those suggestions into our work program development process in 2027.

Key Results

Implementation of our recommendations between July 2024 and June 2026 contributed to:

Safety and wellbeing of people in custody and corrections officers increased through new required annual training

Prosecuting Attorney's Office is better equipped to use data to identify and address disparities in sex assault case outcomes

People seeking protection orders can use county protection order websites more safely and easily

Youth in detention have improved access to reading materials and clocks, and younger youth are now housed separately from older youth

Sheriff's Office uses more efficient, risk-based approach to its purchasing process

98%
CONCURRENCE

Concurrence Increases Impact

Concurrence with our recommendations is the first step in positive change for the County. Between July 2023 and June 2026, we made 41 recommendations to law enforcement-related functions. Agencies concurred with 40 of these recommendations.

54%
TOOK ACTION

Advancement Toward Implementation

Following up on our recommendations advances positive change by providing transparency and increasing accountability. We track recommendations until they are complete; we reviewed 81 audit recommendations over the last two years and agencies took action toward implementing 44. Some of these recommendations were followed up on more than once in the reporting period.

29%
REMAIN OPEN

Some Recommendations Remain Open Over Many Years of Follow Up

Of the 81 recommendations we followed up on during this biennium, 23 remained open, meaning there was no progress toward implementation. Of these recommendations, 12 were to the Sheriff's Office; 1 was to a combined group that included the Facilities Management Division, the Sheriff's Office, and County Executive; 2 were to Superior Court; and 8 were to agencies involved in jail diversion efforts. Barriers to progress include long implementation timelines for replacement of data systems, unclear policy direction, and lack of coordination across criminal legal system agencies.

Publications

Between July 2024 and June 2026, our office completed three performance audits and one companion letter related to criminal justice functions in King County. We also published 19 follow-up reports, which followed up on recommendations from 12 audits. All publications are available on the King County Auditor's website.

Performance audit reports:

- *Sheriff's Office: Opportunities to Better Support 911 Callers with Behavioral Health Concerns*
- *Jail Health: Behavioral Health Medications Reach Many Patients, but Gaps Remain for Some*
- *Companion Letter to Jail Health Services Audit*
- *Civil Asset Forfeiture: Increased Transparency Would Improve Accountability*

Other products and presentations:

Human Perspectives in Jail Audits: Lessons from Those Who Live and Work Inside, authored by Law Enforcement Audit Manager Brooke Leary, was published in the Summer 2025 edition of the Association of Local Government Auditors (ALGA) Quarterly. This article later won ALGA's 2025 Outstanding Contribution to the Quarterly Award.

Work in progress:

- Performance Audit of Adult Detention

Follow-up reports:

- Civil Protection Orders
- Early Intervention System)
- Incarceration Alternatives
- Jail Safety
- Juvenile Conditions of Confinement
- Law Enforcement Oversight (2015)*
- Public Defense
- Sex Offense Cases*
- Sherrif's Office Calls for Service
- Sheriff's Office High-Risk Equipment
- Sheriff's Office Overtime
- Sheriff's Office Traffic Stops

**Auditee has now completed all auditor recommendations.*

2024–2026 Law Enforcement Audit Team

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