



For Immediate Release:

April 15, 2026

Contact:

Teresa Taylor

ttaylor@wacops.org

(360) 352-8824

WACOPS Statement on State Auditor’s Performance Audit of Law Enforcement Training Compliance

Washington’s largest law enforcement organization calls on legislature to provide agencies with funding and resources necessary to meet training mandates

Olympia, WA – The [Washington Council of Police & Sheriffs](#) (WACOPS) today addressed the Washington State Auditor’s recent [performance report](#) regarding law enforcement officers’ progress in meeting continuing education requirements mandated by the Law Enforcement Training and Community Safety Act. As one of the organizations that urged the Auditor to review training compliance, WACOPS has released the following statement in response to the Auditor’s findings:

“The State Auditor’s performance report confirms what officers and departments across Washington have long known: that chronic underinvestment is at the root of the state’s training compliance challenges. The report rightly identifies the direct costs to agencies and the significant officer hours as the primary barriers to compliance – a direct result of Washington’s failure to adequately staff and fund law enforcement. This systemic underfunding combined with a hostile narrative toward Washington’s peace officers has left our state ranking dead last in police staffing nationwide for 15 consecutive years. Departments are left with an impossible choice: remove officers from the street to complete training and put innocent people at risk or pay costly overtime to fill staffing gaps – a cycle that is financially and operationally unsustainable.

Our officers embrace every opportunity to learn and grow in their roles. The training completion figures in the State Auditor’s report are a direct reflection of our profession being trapped in a system that lacks the basic resources to satisfy these requirements while maintaining public safety. WACOPS looks forward to collaborating with the Auditor and the legislature to identify a holistic solution to advance a culture of ongoing training, so long as officer feedback on existing barriers is central to that process. However, we are deeply concerned by the Auditor’s suggestion of punitive measures for non-compliance. Punishing departments, and in turn officers, for falling short of training deadlines they lack the resources to meet is counterproductive and will only serve to further undermine recruitment efforts and expedite separations.

On behalf of the over 6,000 WACOPS members who dedicate their lives to serving Washington’s communities, we call on the legislature to take a carrot, not a stick, approach: provide the resources necessary for officers to meet these standards, publicly support this noble career path to attract more people to join the profession, and work to find commonsense, collaborative solutions that strengthen community safety and public trust.”

###

About the Washington Council of Police & Sheriffs:

The [Washington Council of Police & Sheriffs](#) (WACOPS) is a 501 c(6) non-profit organization and Washington’s largest, oldest, and most influential organization representing active-duty rank-and-file law enforcement professionals since 1962. Today, WACOPS represents more than 100 member organizations



and over 6,000 public safety professionals. As a trade association, WACOPS is focused on our members – working directly with legislators and stakeholders on policy proposals that impact pensions, collective bargaining rights, and safety.