



# Washington State Auditor's Office

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## Initiative 1163: Home Care Aide Certification

### Program background

Long-term care workers in Washington provide support and personal care to elderly and disabled adults, helping them with eating, bathing, dressing, and carrying out many activities of daily living. They can work in the client's home or in residential facilities, such as adult family homes and assisted living facilities. In 2011, voters approved Initiative 1163 which requires workers to undergo state and federal background checks, complete 75 hours of training within 120 days of being hired, and pass a home care aide certification exam and skills test within 200 days. Some workers are exempt from these requirements, including children and parent caregivers, workers grandfathered into the system, and workers with other certifications such as registered nurses and nursing assistant certified.

### Related audit

This audit is being done in concert with an audit examining barriers to completing certification.

The Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) are responsible for implementing, overseeing and enforcing the initiative's new requirements at the state level. The initiative also requires the State Auditor's Office to conduct performance audits of the long-term in-home care program every two years.

The first report (January 2013) examined the first four months of the program and found that only 29 percent of those who applied obtained a certificate. Acknowledging that the rate was unacceptably low, DSHS and DOH made several improvements to its processes to help applicants obtain certification. The second report (December 2014) showed that these improvements contributed to a higher completion rate even as many more people applied for the credential. However, many applicants still did not complete the process and did not obtain a home care aide certificate; only 58 percent obtained a certificate in 2013. The report recommended that DSHS and DOH continue to work to identify barriers that deter workers from applying for, or not completing, the certification process. It also recommended that DSHS notify adult family home providers, reminding them of their responsibilities related to I-1163, and follow up on specific issues with some of the homes.

### Scope and objectives

This audit will seek to answer the following questions:

1. Have the certification completion rates among home care aide applicants improved since the last audit?
2. Have DSHS and DOH implemented the recommendations from our 2014 report?

### Timing

Audit results will be published in the summer of 2016.